**Communication: Meaning, Purpose, Importance and Principles**

### Meaning and Nature of Communi­cation:

The exchange of information or passing of information, ideas or thought from one person to the other or from one end to the other is communication. According to McFarland communication is, “a process of meaningful interaction among human beings. More specifically, it is the process by which meanings are perceived and understandings are reached among human beings.” Newman and summer defined communication as “an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more persons.”

Communication is the process of passing information from one person to another. The purpose of communication understands of information. Whatever one wants to say to someone should be clearly understood by him else the very purpose of the communication would be defeated.

In an organisation communication facilitates the flow of information and understanding between different people and departments through different media using all the channels and networks. This flow of information is vital for managerial effectiveness and decision making in general and for human resource manager in particular as he has to be in contact with the managers of various departments, employees and workers and trade union leaders.

Communication thus helps understand people better removing misunderstanding and creating clarity of thoughts and expression. It also educates people. The communication may be written or oral, formal, informal, and upward, downward, horizontal, diagonal, interpersonal, intrapersonal, interdepartmental, intra-organisational.

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The communication brings people together, closer to each other. The communication is an important management function closely associated with all other managerial functions. It bridges the gap between individuals and groups through flow of information and understanding between them. Information is the most vital aspect for communication. It is the information which is transmitted, studied, analyzed and interpreted and stored. The manager therefore has to spare time to collect, analyze and store the information for decision-making and routine day to day business.

### Purpose of Communication:

Management is getting the things done through others. The people working in the organisation should therefore be informed how to do the work assigned to them in the best possible manner. The communication is essential in any organisation.

**The purpose of the communication can be summed up into the following:**

#### 1. Flow of Information:

The relevant information must flow continuously from top to bottom and vice versa. The staff at all levels must be kept informed about the organisational objectives and other developments taking place in the organisation. A care should be taken that no one should be misinformed. The information should reach the incumbent in the language he or she can understand better. The use of difficult words should be avoided. The right information should reach the right person, at right time through the right person.

#### 2. Coordination:

It is through communication the efforts of all the staff working in the organisation can be coordinated for the accomplishment of the organisational goals. The coordination of all personnel’s and their efforts is the essence of management which can be attained through effective communication.

#### 3. Learning Management Skills:

The communication facilitates flow of information, ideas, beliefs, perception, advice, opinion, orders and instructions etc. both ways which enable the managers and other supervisory staff to learn managerial skills through experience of others. The experience of the sender of the message gets reflected in it which the person at the receiving end can learn by analyzing and understanding it.

#### 4. Preparing People to Accept Change:

The proper and effective communication is an important tool in the hands of management of any organisation to bring about overall change in the organisational policies, procedures and work style and make the staff to accept and respond positively.

#### 5. Developing Good Human Relations:

Managers and workers and other staff exchange their ideas, thoughts and perceptions with each other through communication. This helps them to understand each other better. They realize the difficulties faced by their colleagues at the workplace. This leads to promotion of good human relations in the organisation.

#### 6. Ideas of Subordinates Encouraged:

The communication facilitates inviting and encouraging the ideas from subordinates on certain occasions on any task. This will develop creative thinking. Honoring subordinates’ ideas will further motivate them for hard work and a sense of belonging to the organisation will be developed. It will provide them with the encouragement to share information with their superiors without hesitation. The managers must know the ideas, thoughts, comments, reactions and attitudes of their subordinates and subordinates should know the same from the lowest level staff of their respective departments.

### Importance of Communication:

Effective communication is vital for efficient management and to improve industrial relations. In modern world the growth of telecommunication, information technology and the growing competition and complexity in production have increased importance of communication in organisations large and small irrespective of their type and kind. A corporate executive must be in a position to communicate effectively with his superiors, colleagues in other departments and subordinates. This will make him perform well and enable him to give his hundred percent to the organisation.

**The following points can illustrate the importance of communication in human resource management:**

#### 1. Base for Action:

Communication acts as a base for any action. Starting of any activity begins with communication which brings information necessary to begin with.

#### 2. Planning Becomes Easy:

Communication facilitates planning. Planning is made easy by communication. Any type of information regarding the human resource requirement of each department of the organisation with their qualifications, the type and kinds of job etc. can be collected through communication which helps in human resource planning. Policies and programmes for their acquisition can be prepared and implemented. In the entire process communication plays a vital role, it also facilitates managerial planning of the organisation.

#### 3. Means of Coordination:

Communication is an important tool for coordinating the efforts of various people at work in the organisation.

#### 4. Aids in Decision-Making:

The information collected through communication aids in decision-making. Communication facilitates access to the vital information required to take decisions.

#### 5. Provides Effective Leadership:

A communication skill bring manager near to his subordinates and exchange ideas and submits appropriate proposals, knows their opinions, seeks advices and make decisions. This enables a manager to win confidence of his subordinates through constantly communicating with them and removing probable misunderstandings. In this way he leads his people to accomplish the organisational goal.

#### 6. Boosts Morale and Motivation:

An effective communication system instills confidence among subordinates and workers ensuring change in their attitude and behaviour. The main cause of conflict and dissatisfaction is misunderstanding which can be removed through communication skills. The removal of misunderstanding makes manager and his subordinates understand each other and create good industrial relations. This boosts up the morale of the people and motivates them to work harder.

### Principles of Communication:

Lack of effective communication renders an organisation handicapped. So to have effective communication certain principles are to be followed.

**They are as follows:**

#### 1. Clarity:

The principle of clarity means the communicator should use such a language which is easy to understand. The message must be understood by the receiver. The words used should be simple and unambiguous. The language should not create any confusion or misunderstanding. Language is the medium of communication; hence it should be clear and understandable.

#### 2. Adequacy and Consistency:

The communicator must carefully take into account that the information to be communicated should be complete and adequate in all respect. Inadequate and incomplete message creates confusion and delays the action to be taken. The adequate information must be consistent with the organizational objectives, plans, policies and procedures. The message which is inconsistent may play havoc and distort the corporate interests.

#### 3. Integration:

The principle of integration portrays that through communication the efforts of human resources of the organisation should be integrated towards achievement of corporate objectives. The very aim of communication is to achieve the set target. The communication should aim at coordinating the activities of the people at work to attain the corporate goals.

#### 4. Economy:

The unnecessary use of communication system will add to cost. The system of communication must be used efficiently, timely i.e. at the appropriate time and when it is necessary. The economy in use of communication system can be achieved in this way.

#### 5. Feedback:

The purpose of communication will be defeated if feedback is not taken from the receiver. The confirmation of the receipt of the message in its right perspective from its receiver fulfills the object of communication. The feedback is essential only in case of written communication and messages sent through messengers. In case of oral type of communication the feedback is immediately known.

#### 6. Need for Communication Network:

The route through which the communication passes from sender or communicator to its receiver or communicate refers to communication network. For effective communication this network is essential. The managerial effectiveness will also depend upon the availability of adequate network.

#### 7. Attention:

The message communicated must draw the attention of the receiver staff and ensure action from him in the right perspective. The efficient, sincere and prompt manager succeeds in drawing the attention of his subordinates to what he is conveying.

It is the psychology of the people that they watch their superiors closely and then respond to their orders or instructions. Lazy and insincere superiors fail to garner support for themselves and their instructions usually are not taken seriously by their subordinates. Adhering to the above principles shall make communication effective, minimize the human relations problems and increase the overall efficiency

## Communications Process

Communications is a continuous process which mainly involves three elements viz. sender, message, and receiver. The elements involved in the communication process are explained below in detail:

### 1. Sender

The sender or the communicator generates the message and conveys it to the receiver. He is the source and the one who starts the communication

### 2. Message

It is the idea, information, view, fact, feeling, etc. that is generated by the sender and is then intended to be communicated further.

### 3. Encoding

The message generated by the sender is encoded symbolically such as in the form of words, pictures, gestures, etc. before it is being conveyed.

### 4. Media

It is the manner in which the encoded message is transmitted. The message may be transmitted orally or in writing. The medium of communication includes telephone, internet, post, fax, e-mail, etc. The choice of medium is decided by the sender.

Learn more about [*Types of Communication here in detail*](https://www.toppr.com/guides/business-correspondence-and-reporting/communication/types-of-communication/).

### 5. Decoding

It is the process of converting the symbols encoded by the sender. After decoding the message is received by the receiver.

### 6. Receiver

He is the person who is last in the chain and for whom the message was sent by the sender. Once the receiver receives the message and understands it in proper perspective and acts according to the message, only then the purpose of communication is successful.

### 7. Feedback

Once the receiver confirms to the sender that he has received the message and understood it, the process of communication is complete.

### 8. Noise

It refers to any obstruction that is caused by the sender, message or receiver during the [process of communication](https://www.toppr.com/guides/business-management-and-entrepreneurship/elements-of-direction-communication/). For example, bad telephone connection, faulty encoding, faulty decoding, inattentive receiver, poor understanding of message due to prejudice or inappropriate gestures, etc.

**Communications**

Communications is fundamental to the existence and survival of humans as well as to an organization. It is a process of creating and sharing ideas, information, views, facts, feelings, etc. among the people to reach a common understanding. Communication is the key to the Directing [function of management.](https://www.toppr.com/guides/business-studies/nature-and-significance-of-management/levels-and-functions-of-management/)

A [manager](https://www.toppr.com/guides/business-management-and-entrepreneurship/nature-of-management-and-its-process/management-functions/) may be highly qualified and skilled but if he does not possess good communication skills, all his ability becomes irrelevant. A manager must communicate his directions effectively to the subordinates to get the work done from them properly

## Importance of Communication

### 1. The Basis of Co-ordination

The manager explains to the employees the organizational goals, modes of their achievement and also the[interpersonal relationships](https://www.toppr.com/guides/business-correspondence-and-reporting/communication/interpersonal-skills-listening-skills-and-emotional-intelligence/) amongst them. This provides coordination between various employees and also departments. Thus, communications act as a basis for coordination in the [organization](https://www.toppr.com/guides/business-studies/organising/intro-to-organisation-and-its-importance/).

### 2. Fluent Working

A manager coordinates the human and physical elements of an organization to run it smoothly and efficiently. This [coordination](https://www.toppr.com/guides/business-management-and-entrepreneurship/direction-and-coordination/concept-and-features-of-coordination/) is not possible without proper communication.

### 3. The Basis of Decision Making

Proper communication provides information to the manager that is useful for [decision making](https://www.toppr.com/guides/business-management-and-entrepreneurship/planning/decision-making-in-groups/). No decisions could be taken in the absence of information. Thus, communication is the basis for taking the right decisions.

### 4. Increases Managerial Efficiency

The manager conveys the targets and issues instructions and allocates jobs to the [subordinates](https://www.toppr.com/guides/english/conjunction/subordinating-conjunctions/). All of these aspects involve communication. Thus, communication is essential for the quick and effective performance of the managers and the entire organization.

### 5. Increases Cooperation and Organizational Peace

The two-way communication process promotes co-operation and mutual understanding amongst the workers and also between them and the [management](https://www.toppr.com/bytes/principles-of-management/toppr-icons_studying-on-computer59/). This leads to less friction and thus leads to industrial peace in the factory and efficient operations.

### 6. Boosts Morale of the Employees

Good communication helps the workers to adjust to the physical and social aspect of work. It also improves good human relations in the industry. An efficient system of communication enables the management to motivate, influence and satisfy the subordinates which in turn boosts their morale and keeps them motivated.

## ****Types of Communication****

### 1. Formal Communication

[Formal](https://www.toppr.com/guides/english/writing/formal-letters/) communications are the one which flows through the official channels designed in the organizational chart. It may take place between a superior and a subordinate, a subordinate and a superior or among the same cadre employees or managers. These communications can be oral or in writing and are generally recorded and filed in the office.

Formal communication may be further classified as Vertical communication and Horizontal communication.

#### Vertical Communication

[Vertical Communications](https://www.toppr.com/guides/business-communication-and-ethics/intro-to-business-communication/effective-oral-communication/) as the name suggests flows vertically upwards or downwards through formal channels. Upward communication refers to the flow of communication from a subordinate to a superior whereas downward communication flows from a superior to a subordinate.

Application for grant of leave, submission of a progress report, request for loans etc. are some of the examples of upward communication. Sending notice to employees to attend a meeting, delegating work to the subordinates, informing them about the company policies, etc. are some examples of downward communication.

#### Horizontal Communication

Horizontal or lateral communication takes place between one division and another. For example, a production manager may contact the finance manager to discuss the delivery of raw material or its purchase.

#### Types of communication networks in formal communication:

* **Single chain:** In this type of network communications flows from every superior to his subordinate through a single chain.
* **Wheel:** In this network, all subordinates under one superior communicate through him only. They are not allowed to talk among themselves.
* **Circular:** In this type of network, the communication moves in a circle. Each person is able to communicate with his adjoining two persons only.
* **Free flow:** In this network, each person can communicate with any other person freely. There is no restriction.
* **Inverted V:** In this type of network, a subordinate is allowed to communicate with his immediate superior as well as his superior’s superior also. However, in the latter case, only ordained communication takes place.

### 2. Informal Communication

Any communication that takes place without following the formal channels of communication is said to be [informal](https://www.toppr.com/guides/english/writing/informal-letters/) communication. The Informal communication is often referred to as the ‘grapevine’ as it spreads throughout the organization and in all directions without any regard to the levels of authority.

The informal communication spreads rapidly, often gets distorted and it is very difficult to detect the source of such communication. It also leads to rumors which are not true. People’s behavior is often affected by the rumors and informal discussions which sometimes may hamper the work environment.

However, sometimes these channels may be helpful as they carry information rapidly and, therefore, may be useful to the manager at times. Informal channels are also used by the managers to transmit information in order to know the reactions of his/her subordinates.

Learn more about [*7 C’s of Communication here in detail*](https://www.toppr.com/guides/business-communication-and-ethics/intro-to-business-communication/principles-business-communication/).

#### Types of Grapevine network:

* **Single strand:** In this network, each person communicates with the other in a sequence.
* **Gossip network:**In this type of network, each person communicates with all other persons on a non-selective basis.
* **Probability network:**In this network, the individual communicates randomly with other individuals.
* **Cluster Network:** In this network, the individual communicates with only those people whom he trusts. Out of these four types of networks, the Cluster network is the most popular in organizations.

## Barriers to Communication

The [communication barriers](https://www.toppr.com/guides/business-correspondence-and-reporting/communication/barriers-in-communication/) may prevent communication or carry incorrect meaning due to which misunderstandings may be created. Therefore, it is essential for a manager to identify such barriers and take appropriate measures to overcome them. The barriers to communication in organizations can be broadly grouped as follows:

### 1. Semantic Barriers

These are concerned with the problems and obstructions in the process of encoding and decoding of a message into words or impressions. Normally, such barriers result due to use of wrong words, faulty translations, different interpretations, etc.

For example, a manager has to communicate with workers who have no knowledge of the English language and on the other side, he is not well conversant with the Hindi language. Here, language is a barrier to communication as the manager may not be able to communicate properly with the workers.

### 2. Psychological Barriers

Emotional or psychological factors also act as barriers to communication. The state of mind of both sender and receiver of communication reflects in effective communication. A worried person cannot communicate properly and an angry recipient cannot understand the message properly.

Thus, at the time of communication, both the sender and the receiver need to be psychologically sound. Also, they should trust each other. If they do not believe each other, they cannot understand each other’s message in its original sense.

### 3. Organizational Barriers

The factors related to organizational structure, rules and regulations authority relationships, etc. may sometimes act as barriers to effective communication. In an organization with a highly centralized pattern, people may not be encouraged to have free communication. Also, rigid rules and regulations and cumbersome procedures may also become a hurdle to communication.

### 4. Personal Barriers

The personal factors of both sender and receiver may act as a barrier to[effective communication](https://www.toppr.com/guides/business-correspondence-and-reporting/communication/characteristics-effective-communication/). If a superior thinks that a particular communication may adversely affect his authority, he may suppress such communication.

Also, if the superiors do not have confidence in the competency of their subordinates, they may not ask for their advice. The subordinates may not be willing to offer useful suggestions in the absence of any reward or appreciation for a good suggestion.

**Scope of Business Communication**

 Communication is an inseparable feature of human life. It includes all the activities of a person form his birth to death. We cannot think of passing even a single day without any short of Communication. The scope or uses of Communication cannot be demarcated; its importance is indispensable for all. The scope of Business Communication is discussed below form different perspectives:

#### Scope of Business Communication

**Communication in Business**: Business functions throughout effectual Communication and without it business can never be run. Communication is personally related to production of goods and services, purchasing and selling, warehousing, distribution and to other business activities. The nation within and external the business organization might be communicated with proper in sequence so that day can take steps accordingly. Furthermore, Business organization is to do a few social responsibilities also. Therefore, now-a-days every large organization has a “Public Relation Department” to communicate with its environment.

**Communication in Decision Making**: Person or organization, each is to take decision on various issues daily. In each case, proper information is vital to make perfect decision and [***Communication***](https://bizcommunicationcoach.com/what-is-communication-meaning-of-communication/) plays pivotal role here by supplying relevant information.

**Communication in Management**: Communication is careful as one of the greatest weapons of Management. Each level of Management like planning, organizing, recruiting, leading, motivation, coordination and control depends on sound Communication method. Each organization, big or small, is to make plan to attain the desired goals or objectives and Management is to collect information from a variety of people and organizations to make a correct plan. Later than declaring the plan Management gives essential advice and directions to employees to carry out the plan and it is done by Communication. Co-ordination among and among different departments and branches is also brought-forth from side to side [**Business Communication**](https://bizcommunicationcoach.com/).

**Communication is social life**: Human beings are gregarious and everybody in the society is related to each other. Business Communication has played vital role in this social bondage of human beings. People can share their sorrows, happiness etc. because of the presence of communication.

**Communication in state life**: State life cannot be run without the flow of info-communication. Business Communication plays vital role in performing the activities of different ministries, departments, divisions and offices of the state. Government maintains the functions of the state by the different modes of C**ommunication**. Every government runs a separate ministry name as “Ministry of Communication.

## Scope of Business Communication

**Communication in international relations**: This is the age of globalization and due to tremendous development in communication; the entire world is viewed as a single village (global village). Changes are taking place all over the world and in order to cope with the latest developments of the world every person, organization and state is to communicate with different quarters very rapidly. The diplomatic, economic and trade relations between and among nations in the international arena are based on effective and efficient **Business Communication**.

**Communication in Publicity**: In this world of information, every organization is keen to advertise itself through some distinctive ways. By Communicating with concerned parties an organization does publicity also.

**Communication in personal life**: We do various activities from dawn to dusk and we depend on Communication for doing that. Nobody can pass his/her daily life without the application of Communication. Actually it is a part and parcel of our personal life. Everybody is to communicate with different people and organizations daily.

**Communication in Industrial relation**: Good industrial relation that means owner-employee relation is a pre-requisite to bring success in Business. Employees are the main spring of an organization and their cooperation is a must to operate Business activities. They might be motivated and their morale might be raised and their complaints and grievances are to be handled with due consideration. To build a harmonious employer-employee relationship, the department of public relation of each organization acts closely under the directives of top Management and **Communication** is indispensable here.

In fine, we can conclude that the Scope of Business Communication is so widened that it cannot be expressed shortly. We find the presence of Communication in every sphere of our life. Actually Business Communication is there where information in needed and there is no person or organization to which information is not necessary. From cradle to cemetery, we find the **Scope of Business Communication**. There are more information about [Purposes of Business Communication Objectives](https://bizcommunicationcoach.com/the-purposes-of-business-communication-objectives/)

**TYPES AND FORMS OF COMMUNICATION**

Having understood elements of communication, their functions and placement in various models, it is time

to complete an other chapter on types and forms of communication before resuming our discussions on

various other areas of mass communication for a detailed study.

**Types of communication**

Broadly speaking, whole human communication could be classified into two distinct parts.

� **Intra personal communication**

� **Inter personal communication**

**Intra personal communication**

The part of communication in which self of a human being is involved only and the

Communicationis confined to one human entity. This means that all the elements

which come into action in a given piece of communication are located within the self of an individual. A message originating from source part of the brain travels through the channel of nerves to reach another location, however close it may be to the point of origin of message, where it is interpreted and understood as receiver. All  the process  of meditation,  thinking,  monologue and even dreaming while asleep are all but examples of intra  communication.

**Inter personal communication**

This part ofcommunication belongs to involving two or more individuals for exchange of information. Since this part is experienced more due to its vastness, it is further classified in many categories.

**Inter personal**

The simplest form in which more than one individual communicate to each other

**Group Communication**

More often people are seen exchanging views with almost all the participants enjoying an equal

status on one count or the other. Like all the players of a hockey team, class-fellows, doctors, teachers,

bureaucrats, politicians, economists etc.

**Organizational communication**

In this part, communication usually takes place on vertical lines. For instance, a company director is

passing on instructions to managers who would be guiding accordingly to field officers and the relevant

other field staff. An army general may not be talking to lowest rank men in khaki but would follow the

chain of organizational command to deliver his message to the last rank people. Be it a corporate sector,

NGO, a political party, an educational institution, the communication process would strictly follow the

essentials of the organizational communication.

**Mass Communication**

In this category we refer to the communication originating from one source and meant for all

possible audience irrespective of distance, cast, creed, religion, nationality and beyond. The mass

communication involves use of technology for it is not possible to carry message to a very high number of

receivers with out the use of certain devices or techniques. All other types of communication may take place

when the source is coming across receivers without involving technology. That is why more research and

investment has gone into handling the mass communication

**Forms of communication**

In another way we can examine the communication process by dividing it into different forms of

exchanging messages

**Verbal**

All the messages said or written in words make part of the verbal communication. This way, all that

appears as text in books, magazines and newspapers is part of verbal communication. One can guess the

size of an industry in the area of mass communication based on verbal communication.

Likewise, all the words heard on radio, television, telephone or any other public address system are also part

of verbal communication. Again, the industry and technology based on verbal communication is enormous

in size and value as well.

One amazing part of the verbal communication is the availability of events of significance in history. Little

is understood about the past from the available artifacts but a great deal of human civilization, growth and

conflict is available in the form of verbal communication. The spread of religions and sharing of most

scientific work is also due to the verbal communication over the centuries which recorded facts, sentiments

and event of common human interest.

It is on the basis of verbal communication that the world has seen great poets, writers, playwrights, historian

and newsmen. This also proves at what great scale the verbal communication has created job opportunities.

In modern days, people having verbal communication skills are in high demand, especially with the fast

expanding media all across the globe.

**Non verbal**

**Senses**

Part of human communication involving other than written or spoken words is referred to as non

verbal communication. It involves human senses ­ sight, taste, touch, hearing and smelling.

As a matter of fact about 90 per cent communication among human beings takes place through their senses

and the rest by the use of words as languages.

**Symbols, signs**

Emblems, gestures, symbols and signs make more vivid and strong communication as compared to

words which are often difficult to decipher.

For instance making a victory sign by politicians, army generals, sportspersons and leaders in general at the

time of defeating enemy is easily understood even by the illiterate. If the same feeling is expressed in words,

many may not come even close to understanding what it is.

The traffic signals, red-cross mark and the symbol of dove are but few illustrations to make people around

understand what a message stands far.

**Combination**

For practical purposes, however, the use of verbal and non verbal makes a very strong piece of

communication. One may see a match on TV but an enthusiast commentator may relish the joy if your

favorite team is winning the game. Similarly, feature films, documentaries and dramas on mini screen stand

for more effective pieces of communication than if only one for of communication is brought into use.

Even the newspapers and magazines, which are more to bank on verbal communication, carry so much of

non verbal communication in the form of images, graphics and maps.

The research journals also exploit the verbal-non verbal combination to share and advance the cause of

scientific developments. In fact it has become rather impossible to find a newspaper and magazine, even

books, which do not use non verbal communication to explain various aspects of daily life

**Social media**

Social media, as you can imagine, has monumentally[**changed the world of journalism**](https://www.crowdynews.com/blog/how-social-media-changed-the-newsroom/), in ways that no one could have comprehended before its colossal rise.

Social media users often report on news via their pages before the story has even been assigned to a journalist, and this alone has completely **altered the concept of breaking news.**

*Journalists don’t even decide what the biggest story of the day is anymore, rather, society does, and the news that goes viral is often produced by social media users themselves.*

These days, people want **real-time information**, which is why so many of us turn to social media sites such as Twitter to stay up-to-date with the news. It was even found that [two-thirds of U.S. adults](https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-usa-internet-socialmedia/two-thirds-of-american-adults-get-news-from-social-media-survey-idUKKCN1BJ2A8) get news from social media, demonstrating just how popular it is as a media outlet.

This then poses as a threat to journalists. If they have gathered a news story second-hand from social media, which is often the case, and they find a new angle that isn’t yet out there but sit on it for too long, they risk having the new angle reported on first by other competitors, or worse, social media users (dun dun dunnnn)!

Social media could therefore be seen as the rawest form of journalism — it provides**eyewitness and first-hand accounts**and is the **fastest channel for breaking news.**

The news of the death of Michael Jackson in 2009 broke on social media before any major news networks. [TMZ.com](http://www.tmz.com/), the American entertainment website, released the story first, before the mass of tweets about it forced Twitter to temporarily shut down. This was two hours before it was confirmed by the LA Times and Associated Press.

“We saw an instant doubling of tweets per second the moment the story broke.” — [Biz Stone](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1195651/How-Michael-Jacksons-death-shut-Twitter-overwhelmed-Google--killed-Jeff-Goldblum.html), Twitter co-founder.

I remember this day; I was rehearsing for a dance competition at home in Guernsey, Channel Islands, when one of my team mates who was watching at the time stood up to announce that Michael Jackson had just passed away. She found the news on Twitter, not from a major media outlet. This is how powerful social media is as a tool for news reporting.

## So could social media be replacing traditional journalism?

While some do believe that social media is a true form of journalism and could potentially be the future of it, others (including me) believe that social media and traditional journalism can work together in acting as message diffusing systems. By this I mean journalists can provide the news stories that social media is able to spread far and wide, or vice versa. In this sense, **social media accentuates and** **compliments journalism, rather than replacing it.**

In ways, social media has introduced a new layer to the world of journalism; **interaction and communication with audiences**, which journalists can seriously benefit from.

Some other advantages of this new dimension for journalists are that they are able to partake in wider newsgathering, reach out to sources directly, build personal relationships and increase engagement with audiences, just to name a few.

*“New technology enables normal people to do reporting. But new technology also improves the monitoring quality of journalism as well.” —*[*Sarah Hartley*](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1195651/How-Michael-Jacksons-death-shut-Twitter-overwhelmed-Google--killed-Jeff-Goldblum.html)*, the Guardian*

So, I don’t believe that journalism is dying in the current world of social media. I do believe however, that social media in one way or another technically is a form of journalism, because it’s a channel that allows people to report on news. But,**it is not replacing traditional journalism**as such because more so, it can be used to enhance it, and the two can **work together in informing the world effectively**

It is so easy to recognize a newspaper, a television or a radio. You have grown up with them. So, you can recognise them as Traditional Media.

But what about Social Media? How many of us can define Social Media or recognise its different forms?

The name that comes to our mind when we talk of Social Media is Facebook. Some will add Twitter, and some YouTube. These are the most recognisable “faces” of Social Media.

But what is Social media and how is it different to Traditional Media?

You get a better idea of Social Media if you break the term into its two components: social and media. The ‘social’ part comes from people interacting with each other. And the ‘media’ part comes from the platforms that make these interactions possible.

These platforms share some common characteristics, based on which they can be grouped in six clear categories.

(Read [**Social Media can be organized in 6 clear categories**](https://www.easymedia.in/social-media-can-organized-6-clear-categories/))

#### Traditional Media vs Social Media

**# Difference 1**  
**Creation and dissemination of content**: Traditional Media is based on the principle of one-to-many. An Editor decides what is news; which news reports should be published in the day’s newspaper or which reports should be telecast in the next bulletin. The news consumers, that is the readers and viewers, have no role to play in the creation or dissemination of content.

Social Media, in contrast, is a media that works on the principle of many-to-many. Any individual can create and share content. This makes the content creation process more democratic.

**# Difference 2**

**Focus or purpose:** Social Media, as the name suggests, is a media where people come to interact with friends, relatives, acquaintances etc. It need not be news-based. In fact, a very small part of the Social Media universe is devoted to creation or dissemination of news.

The Traditional Media is primarily a news media. It has traditionally performed the function of gathering and disseminating news, and continues to do so.

That is why the two media are like chalk and cheese.

**# Difference 3**

**Interactivity:** Social Media allows users to comment on content created by their friends, relatives or peer group. There is no Big Brother blue pencilling comments. All comments are in real time. They enrich published content, and empower people to share views.

The Traditional Media is tightly patrolled. All communication is one-way: from the editor to the readers. The most that a reader can hope is to get a letter published in the Letters column of the newspaper. There is, of course, no guarantee as to how much of the letter will be edited before it is published. This interactivity is even more limited in the case of television.

**# Difference 4**

**Convergence:** Social Media is a truly convergent media. You can publish content as text, audio, video, graphics or photographs on Social Media sites.

The Traditional Media can work in only one format – either as print or as radio or as television. There is no convergence in the Traditional Media space.

**# Difference 5**

**Speed**: Social Media is instant. Reports published on Social Media sites can be accessed instantly.

Traditional Media takes time to disseminate information. In the case of newspapers, this is limited to once a day; television or radio can update reports more frequently. But they cannot match the speed of Social Media unless they go live.

**# Difference 6**

**Cost of creation:** It costs a small fortune to set up a newspaper, radio or television station. Few individuals can therefore hope to become publishers.

Social Media platforms allow free posting of content. Anyone can therefore become a publisher or broadcaster.

**# Difference 7**

**Reach and numbers:** The reach of Social Media is staggering. It connects billions of individuals across the globe.

In contrast, the reach of traditional media is limited to the number of readers or viewers that individual newspapers or channels may have

# 7 key differences between Social Media and Traditional Media

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What is Traditional Media

1.

Any form of mass communication available before the advent of digital **media**. This includes television, radio, newspapers, books, and magazines. [Learn more in: Mobile Phones: News Consumption, News Creation, and News Organization Accommodations](https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/mobile-phones-news-consumption-news-creation-and-news-organization-accommodations/130148)

2.

Offline **media** such as letters, phone calls for a landline, in-cell TV, and face-to-face visits. [Learn more in: Restricted Communication: Social Relationships and the Media Use of Prisoners](https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/restricted-communication/210897)

3.

Any single item or set of items only relying upon physical form for the conveyance of information leading to meaning in the mind of a user. [Learn more in: Digital Media Affecting Society: Instruction and Learning](https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/digital-media-affecting-society/136673)

4.

**Traditional media** constitutes a set of **media** covering **media** channels such as television, newspapers, radio, and magazines. [Learn more in: Use of Transmedia Storytelling Within the Context of Postmodern Advertisement](https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/use-of-transmedia-storytelling-within-the-context-of-postmodern-advertisement/207439)

Traditional folk media is a term used to denote ‘people’s performances’. This term refers to the performing arts which can be described as the cultural symbols of the people. Folk dance, rural drama and musical variety of the village people, all come under traditional media. Traditional folk media is not just confined to dance and music, but also includes art and crafts. Tradi-tional folk media originated as a consequence of people’s need to express themselves. These performing arts pulsate with life and slowly change through the flux of time. In India folk performance is a composite art. It is a total art created by the fusion of elements from music, dance, pantomime, versification, epic ballad recitation, religion and festival peasantry. It absorbs ceremonials, rituals, beliefs and of course the social system.

According to veteran folk media scholar Balwant Garhgi “Folk media represents the people in their natural habitat, with all their contradictions and multifarious activities. It gives a glimpse of their style of speech, music, dance, dress and wisdom. It contains a rich store of mythological heroes, medieval romances, chivalric tales, social customs, beliefs, and legends. In order to understand the colourful diversity and unity of India, it is important to see the folk theatre in its natural settings.”

Rural India is a treasure trove of folk art, theatre, music, dance, art and craft. The folk art forms satisfy our innate need for self expression. The traditional forms preserve and disseminate the tradition and culture of our forefathers infusing life into them. Every region has its own folk art from that is immensely popular and relevant in that area and Assam is no exception.

Some of the most popular traditional folk media of Assam include Ojapali, Mobile theatre, Bhaona, Sattriya dance, Loka Geet, Bor Geet, Bon Geet, Bihu. Puppetry and street theatre are also quite popular. Again there are several types of variations of a single art from. Bhaona for instance is a classical form which is performed within strict norms in the naamghars. On the other hand in parts of lower Assam, there are Dhuliya Bhaona and Khuliya Bhaona which are free from the rigidity of the classical Bhaona and are very flexible. Similarly the Bihu is performed with slight variations by the Assamese, the Misings, the Bodos, the Karbis etc.

Being ancient forms of art, the folk media is very close to the hearts of the people. Traditional media holds universal appeal. Its understanding is direct and at the personal level. Traditional folk performances are uniformly popular, irrespective of the educational, social and financial standing of any community. Various researchers have established the importance of traditional folk media in development communication. Traditionally, folk media were primarily used for entertainment, social communication and persuasive communication. Now, there are efforts to involve folk media for conveying development messages. In the past few decades traditional folk media have been increasingly recognized as viable tools to impart development messages, both as live performances and also in a form integrated with electronic mass media.

Here are some of the characteristics of traditional folk media :  
1. They have sustained the onslaught of time  
2. They have sustained by changing with the changing times  
3. Any person is always a participant in the performance, never an audience.  
4. It is spontaneous.  
5. It is flexible.  
6. It is cost effective and therefore has enhanced repeatability.  
7. It is has immediate feedback and increased attentiveness.  
8. It is performed in a common language promoting intelligibility.  
9. It is direct and personal

Now let us glance over the advantages of these forms of media over the conventional mass media.

Intimacy with the masses: We know that every community or ethnic group of society has its own folk and traditional media which are close to their hearts. This is because it is in their person or simply speaking it runs in their blood. Hence, whenever it is performed or enacted by anyone in a society or place most of the masses feel like joining it and closely enjoy it to the maximum.

It is physically very close to the people: You must have seen that most of the folk and traditional media are performed in close proximity of the public gathering. Those of you from Assam and others who live here will know that bihu dances are performed in close proximity with the peoples’ gathering. Thus its effects on the masses are much greater than that of mass media.

These are personal media: While reading about the characteristics of communication as well as mass communication you must have found that the latter is a highly ‘impersonal’ medium. This is because the communicator is communicating with the masses through a mechanical device or medium. That is why the effects of the personal warmth which is found in folk and traditional media are lacking in mass media. This is true for TV, radio, newspaper or a magazine etc. That personal charisma which can move the masses is absent in mass media.

Scope for repeat performances: In these two types of media there is ample scope for repeating a performance if the masses watching it like it. And the audiences can also take part in it by becoming themselves a part of the performing team. This scope is not there in mass media where programmes are broadcast only once and simultaneously. In other words it means that in folk and traditional media programmes and events can be repeatedly performed if people liked them. But in case of mass media this is not possible as programmes are broadcast at the same time for a wide variety of people across a huge area.

Regional / local level variations are important: We can see that folk and traditional media performances can be carried out with adequate scope for some amount of regional or local variations in different places of the country. For example, bihu performances in some areas of Sivasagar district will be somewhat different from the performances in maybe Dibrugarh or Golaghat or Jorhat districts. Same is the case with other forms of folk and traditional media also. However, in case of mass media the same kind of performance has to be watched or listened to by the people everywhere with hardly any scope for regional or local variations at all.

Scope for using body language or non verbal language is adequately available in folk and traditional media: You must have realized the importance of non verbal language in the field of communication. In folk and traditional media non verbal or body language plays a vitally-important role in enhancing the meaning of the messages being exchanged among the participants. So, the scope for using voice modulations, facial gestures, overall body movement etc. all these aspects make these two types of media much more effective than mass media where this scope is far less. Of course, you can say that TV, films and documentaries do have this scope in a good measure. But this can’t be equal to that of a live performance by any person in regard to effectiveness. Besides, you can realize on your own that compared to this aspect, print media is a highly stale one in case of sending across the meanings of its information and messages. That is, even though exclamation signs are used in written languages, yet it does not carry the same kind of emotional strength and effect which one can get in case of radio and TV due to voice modulation.  
  
Use of local language, costumes etc: Every type of folk and traditional media has to be essentially based upon the local ethos, culture and other aspects. Thus the costumes, language used and the settings and background etc. must invariably bear the stamp of that locality and general culture of the area. Otherwise it will not be able to carry the same effects and meanings for the masses.  
  
It is performance oriented: Another important point to be noted in this regard is that most of the folk and traditional media are basically performance-oriented. In simple words it signifies that majority of these two media are a finely-balanced combinations of performance of music and dances. This aspect provides much more effectiveness over its target audiences.

However, let me point out to one major drawback in folk and traditional media. That is, its reach is very limited at one time. That means a folk and traditional media performance usually is done for a group of a hundred or at the most few hundreds or thousands of people. So, to reach lakhs or millions of people their utility or capacity is not at all adequate. It is at best a localized medium. We can address the problems, issues or other aspects of a certain area in the locality’s own language, culture, ethos etc.  
  
Now, due to all these factors folk and traditional media enjoy a far more effectiveness and influence over the masses of whom they are a part of.

As we have already mentioned earlier, one major advantage and characteristic of folk and traditional media is that it is dynamic. That means it changes with the times embracing new elements from time to time. This is why its contents change in different eras of time.  
  
Similarly, its dynamic nature is also reflected in the fact that most of the folk and traditional media are responsive to the major events and happenings in the society. For example, if you will look at Bihu songs over the years you will find that they also contain or address popular and major issues of the different periods of time. Such as – some of the songs depict stories about our freedom struggle against the colonial rulers, some of them depict things about the famous anti-foreigners’ agitation of the 1980s, floods and many other socio-economic problems.  
  
Again, maybe all of you are familiar with the folk culture of Ojapali of Assam. Interestingly, this form of folk culture is basically aimed at creating awareness among the masses through a judiciously-combined dance and scriptures sequences. It is active even today and is carrying on its duties properly for creating awareness about various social issues among the masses in the respective areas where they are performed.

In some parts of lower Assam, there is a folk tradition called ‘mohoho’ festival or the mosquito-repelling festival as moh in Assamese means mosquito. In this folk culture, people of the village form a group and visit all the families of the village for the purpose of alerting the family members about the need for mosquito-repelling. However, this activity also doubles up as a visit of the families for delivering the blessings of the villages elders to the families and reliving the touch of the residents of the villages amongst themselves.

Thus we can see that most of the forms of folk and traditional culture in our society can be transformed into carriers of our developmental communication messages aimed at the masses at grassroots level in each and every nook and corner of the country. This will ensure a much higher scale of success to our efforts in this particular field of communication aimed at the rural underprivileged and illiterate masses.

Traditional folk media is a term used to denote ‘people’s performances’. Folk dance, rural drama and musical variety of the village people, all come under traditional media.  
2. In India folk performance is a composite art. It is a total art created by the fusion of elements from music, dance, pantomime, versification, epic ballad recitation, religion and festival peasantry. It absorbs ceremonials, rituals, beliefs and of course the social system.

3. Rural India is a treasure trove of folk art, theatre, music, dance, art and craft. Every region has its own folk art from that is immensely popular and relevant in that area and Assam is no exception.

4. Some of the most popular traditional folk media of Assam include Ojapali, Mobile theatre, Bhaona, Sattriya dance, Loka Geet, Bor Geet, Bon Geet, Bihu. Puppetry and street theatre are also quite popular.

5. Traditional folk media have some special characteristics. They are:

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b)They have sustained by changing with the changing times

c) Any person is always a participant in the performance, never an audience.d) It is spontaneous.  
e) It is flexible.f) It is cost effective and therefore has enhanced repeatability.

g) It is has immediate feedback and increased attentiveness.

h) It is performed in a common language promoting intelligibility.

i) It is direct and personal.

6. Traditional folk media have several advantages over conventional mass media. They are:a) It has more intimacy with the masses.b)It is physically very close to the people.  
c) It is personal media.d) There is more scope for repeat performances

d) Regional / local level variations make it closer to the people.

e) There is scope for using body language or non verbal language is adequately available in folk and traditional media

f) There is use of local language, costumes etc

g) It is performance oriented

7. The first significant international recognition of role of traditional media in the development in the developing countries came in 1972 when the International Planned Parenthood Federation and UNESCO organized a series of meetings on the integrated use of the folk and the mass media in family planning communication programmes in London.

8. Traditional media has been used in our country ever since the time of the Independence Movement. Even after Independence there have been many instances of the Government using traditional performances for development in rural areas.

**KKHSOU**