

# Management of Communication from Kautilya

Vikas Shringi\*  
Research Scholar

Faculty of Management, Pacific University, Udaipur  
Address: Pattey Ki Gali, Sadar Bazar, Bundi, (Rajasthan)

Dr. Gourava Joshi  
Faculty Member  
Faculty of Management,  
Pacific University

**Abstract:** Communication is the art of management. Those who lack in this skill, can't be good manager. This skill is mostly classified into verbal communication and non-verbal communication. The present paper is an attempt to present the guideline from Kautilya (Chanakya) on communication. He is considered to possess the wisdom of politics and management. Two masterpieces of Kautilya have been chosen for this purpose to present his notions on communication namely Artha-Shaastra and Ethical Aphorisms. In the end a guideline is also presented for the benefit of everyone. It will help each and everyone in communicating because communication is very important function in every paradigm of life.

**Keywords:** Speaking, Listening, Writing, Silence

## Management of Communication from Kautilya

**Introduction:** The present paper entitled "Management of Communication from Kautilya" is an attempt to present the notions of Kautilya on communication. He presents his notions upon excellence in writing, defects of writing and presents a guideline to a lay man that can be used universally.

**Introduction of Kautilya:** Kautilya is also famous by the name 'Chanakya,' He is the master in Politics and Economics. He possesses the wisdom of Governing and Managing. Two documents are available of Kautilya namely: Artha-Shaastra and Neeti-Sutra.

**[A] Advices from Kautilya on Management of Communication:** O man! If you want to win those with just one act, then don't let your tongue speak ill of any other person that's it.<sup>1</sup> One whom you want to harm should be treated to a sweet enticement to make him lower or to deceive him. Similarly, a hunter mimics the call of an animal that he is hunting for.<sup>2</sup>

**[B] Kautilya on Communication:** A document of communication is one of the documents of decree.<sup>3</sup>

**[C] Kautilya on Writing:** Censure, praise, query, statement, request, refusal, reproof, prohibition, injunction, appeasement, help, threatening and propitiation are the thirteen matters arising out of the writing concerned.<sup>4</sup> Chanakya says 'for concluding the writing the word 'iti' and these are the words of so and so should be used.'<sup>5</sup>

**1. Censure:** Mention of defects concerning birth, body or action is censure.<sup>6</sup>

**2. Praise:** Mention of merits is praise. It may pertain to good qualities.<sup>7</sup>

**3. Query:** How is this so? Is a query.<sup>8</sup>

**4. Statement:** Thus, it so... is s statement.<sup>9</sup>

5. **Request:** 'Give it to me' is a request. The basic ingredient of request shall be debt. <sup>10</sup>
6. **Refusal:** I will not give is refusal. <sup>11</sup>
7. **Reproof:** This is worthy of you is a reproof or reprimand. <sup>12</sup>
8. **Prohibition:** This is not to be done is prohibition. <sup>13</sup>
9. **Injunction:** 'Let this to be done' is an injunction. <sup>14</sup>
10. **Appeasement:** 'What I am is you, what objects belong to me are yours' such conciliation is appeasement. <sup>15</sup>
11. **Help:** Aid or assistance is help. <sup>16</sup>
12. **Threatening:** I will see you is threatening which represents a future full of danger. <sup>17</sup>
13. **Propitiation:** Propitiation: may be threefold; in doing a thing, in case of transgression and during calamity of a person. <sup>18</sup>

[D] **Attributes of Excellence in Writing:** Kautilya presents the attributes of excellent writing. He says, 'the arrangement of subject-matter, connection, completeness, sweetness, exaltedness and lucidity constitute the excellence of writing.' <sup>19</sup> In this sloka he presents the six characteristics of good writing.

1. **Arrangement of Subject-Matter:** Arrangement of the matter in proper order is the principal quality of a good document. The directive that the matter be presented in a proper order still continues to be followed. The practice is that the principal matter, or the subject, is written at the top of a communication. This makes the reader aware of what the letter is about and thus helps him in understanding the matter that follows. If the subject-matter is not stated, the contents of the communication may be confusing or interpreted differently. Not indicating the subject-matter in the beginning constitutes a defective writing. <sup>20</sup>
2. **Connection:** Presentation of the subject-matter should be compatible with the matter in hand right up to the end. This attribute has been defined as connection. <sup>21</sup>
3. **Completeness:** There should be no deficiency in expression. There should be no excess matter or words or letters, unnecessary description of details, reasons, citations and illustrations. Such comprehensive expressiveness has been named as 'Completeness.' <sup>22</sup>
4. **Sweetness:** Selection and usage of pleasant words constitute the quality sweetness. <sup>23</sup>
5. **Exaltedness:** Use of the words that are not vulgar is exaltedness. Any written communication must contain refined words, avoiding the base ones. <sup>24</sup>
6. **Lucidity:** Use of easy and familiar words is lucidity. <sup>25</sup>

[E] **Defects of Writing:** Kautilya cautions against the defects in writing (lekh-dosha). He says 'absence of charm, contradiction, repetition, incorrect use of words and confusion are the five defects of writing.' <sup>26</sup> These are the defects of writing.

1. **Absence of Contradiction:** among the defects of writing, the use of black leaf (bad paper) writing unattractive, uneven and faint letters constitute the absence of charm. <sup>27</sup>
2. **Contradiction:** Incompatibility of the later with the earlier or vice-versa constitutes contradiction. <sup>28</sup>
3. **Repetition:** A recurrence of what has been said, without any distinction is repetition. <sup>29</sup>
4. **Incorrect Use of Word:** Wrong use of gender, number, tense and case are all incorrect use of words. <sup>30</sup>
5. **Confusion:** Making of combinations where it should not be and not making where it should be creates confusion. <sup>31</sup>

[F] **Eight Types of Written Documents:** According to Kautilya, the written documents are of eight types. 'documents of communication, command, gift, exemption, authorization, giving news of a happening, reply and those applicable everywhere are the various types of decrees.'<sup>32</sup> Now a brief description of these eight type of documents is presented.

1. **Communication:** Two types of communication have been shown here. One is that, 'You are requested to be having a horse worthy of the king. If this is true, give it to the King.' The second is 'I have learnt that the king has approved your action, you will certainly get some benefit. These are the decrees of communication.'<sup>33</sup>
2. **Command:** Where there is a command of the King, administrator or the court regarding punishment, reward or favour, especially in matter of employees, that is the characteristics of a decree of command.<sup>34</sup>
3. **Favour or Gift:** Where honour is rendered in accordance with merit or gift is given as a reward or help in distress, the document concerned is known as a decree of favour or gift.<sup>35</sup>
4. **Exemption:** The favour, which is conferred at the command of the King or the authority on various castes and on different cities, villages and regions, is called as the decree of exemption.<sup>36</sup>
5. **Authority or Delegation of Authority:** Possession or delegation of authority for doing a work and in the matter of issuing orders, this may be a document authorizing the issue of orders or containing an authorization for doing a work.<sup>37</sup>
6. **Happening:** The document describing a happening may be of two types. The one associated with Divine and the other concerning human beings. Based on the facts, happening may of several varieties, but can be classified into two types stated above.<sup>38</sup>
7. **Document in Reply:** After fully examining the document as it really is and then closely reading it, the document in reply should be prepared. It should be exactly in accordance with the royal ruling.<sup>39</sup>
8. **Decree Applicable Everywhere:** The direction by which the King or the authority asks the officers to ensure protection and comforts for travelers and others, would be the decree applicable everywhere.<sup>40</sup>

[G] **Guidelines from Chanakya-Neeti on Communication:** In this section guideline from Chanakya-Neeti is presented.

- (i) **On learning of endearing words:** Learn. Endearing words from scholars.<sup>41</sup>
- (ii) **On How many times Scholars Speak:** Scholars (Pandita) speak once.<sup>42</sup>
- (iii) **On Polite Words:** Words of good wish is one out of the three real gems.<sup>43</sup> Chanakya emphasize on the importance of polite language. According to him 'A person who is not clever can nor be polite talker. A frank person can't be deceitful.'<sup>44</sup> A real wise man is who; knows to talk according to the situation, speak in a manner befitting his fame and grace.<sup>45</sup> He says 'polite words are one out of the fruits of the world.'<sup>46</sup> Polite talk is one out of the four natural propensities of people. It can't be grafted or crafted.<sup>47</sup> By using the polite words one can win everything. He can know anyone. 'No one is stranger for a polite talker.'<sup>48</sup> Polite taking is one of the signs of one who is qualified for Nirvana.<sup>49</sup> Speaking polite words is a characteristic of noble souls (**Satjan**).<sup>50</sup> Everyone gets endeared by a polite

talker. One should speak sweetly. It costs nothing. So. Why the miser with sweet words.<sup>51</sup> Polite behavior is one out of the characteristics of those directly descended from heaven.<sup>52</sup>

- (iv) **Polite words and Learned Person:** The learned ones take only a few polite words to get satisfied.<sup>53</sup>
- (v) **On Silence:** On the importance of silence he says, The silence doesn't let quarrel appear.<sup>54</sup> A person who is keeps silence for one whose year, opening his mouth only to eat food, gets the honors of the heaven for ten million years.<sup>55</sup>
- (vi) **Kautilya says Language is Identity Card:** A man's language reveals his native place.<sup>56</sup>
- (vii) **Speaking Manner of Drunked:** A drunked can say anything.<sup>57</sup>
- (viii) **On Harsh Words:** Harsh Talkers are descended from hell.<sup>58</sup>
- (ix) **On Using Foul Language:** Those who use foul language they get destroyed.<sup>59</sup> One who speaks foul language is ignored by the prosperity, health, beauty and grace. Even God can't afford the above shortcomings.<sup>60</sup>
- (x) **On Reply:** Reply should be given strictly in accordance with the question.<sup>61</sup>

**Conclusion:** Thus, Kautilya emphasizes upon polite-speaking and presents concept of ethical-communication as well as warns us towards deceitful-communication. Further, he says that a drunken person can speak anything so ought to cautious from them. The guidelines provide by him has universalistic-approach.

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