

Intercultural Communication

by

Dr. Vijai N. Giri
Professor of Communication Studies
Dept. of Humanities & Social Sciences
IIT Kharagpur
email: vng@hss.iitkgp.ernet.in

- ❑ **“Culture is communication and communication is culture”**
- ❑ **Culture is the way we live. It is the air we breath. It is the thought we think. It is the clothes we put on. It is the glasses we wear and look through. Culture is what shapes our perception. It is the collection of values that sustain and direct our lives.**

- **Keesing (1974) points out that cultures must be studied within the social and ecological settings in which humans communicate.**

Culture and Change

Culture and Communication Behaviour

- Individualism-Collectivism
- Power Distance
- Masculinity-Femininity

Cross-Cultural Communication

■ The East vs. The West

- **What is considered natural, appropriate, and therefore, welcome in one culture may be unwelcome and even offensive in another.**

- **Heart and its Logic**

- **We Indians are driven more by the heart than by the mind.**

The Lone Ranger

- Area in which our values differ substantially from the Western ones is the position the individual enjoys in society.
- We are brought up to be the part of a group.

■ Slices of Time

- Different cultures have different perceptions about time.
- The West treats time as a strictly linear, limited resource.
- Time is money.
- We have synchronic/polychronic view of time.

The Social Ladder

- **Our values differ from those of the West in the way we put people on the social ladder.**
- **An Indian who has to communicate with fellow Indians and foreigners will have to keep making adjustments and readjustments in the way hierarchy is practised.**

- **No love Please; we are Indians**

**We express certain emotions very loudly
and certain others very quietly.**

Communicating effectively in a Cross-cultural

- Focus on what is said; try not to read too much into the words or be oversensitive to nonverbal nuances.
- Learn to accept what is said.
- Develop a belief that verbal messages and feedback are powerful and effective.

- Understand that self-affirmation and individuality are important to North Americans and that self-oriented messages are used to separate oneself from others.
- Be aware that everyone should be treated equally and that polite speech applies to family members, intimate friends, and strangers.
- Accept that North Americans value direct talk and that, requests are often stated explicitly.

- **Recognize that being assertive is valued in the US culture and that 'no' is accepted as an assertive response.**
- **Understand that modesty is equated with low self-confidence and that enhancing and crediting oneself is expected.**
- **Learn not to ask personal questions, because they can be offensive and insulting.**
- **Accept that North Americans like to express their opinion openly and are talkative in their social interactions.**

Conclusions

- To become an effective communicator globally, individuals should learn the cross-cultural variability of communication which is very important in personal relationships.
- More attention should be given on how people in different cultures use different communication strategies and skills in maintaining social or personal relationships.
- It is also important that one should understand one's own culture thoroughly before attempting to understand the culture of others.

Thanks a lot !

