

Vol. 4 No. 1 Serial No. 4 2010

BODHI

An Interdisciplinary Journal

ISSN: 2091-0479



Department of Languages and Mass Communication
School of Arts
Kathmandu University

***Sahridayata* in communication**

- Nirmala Mani Adhikary

This article describes *sahridayata*, which has been introduced in the communication discipline and is the core concept in the *sadharanikaran* model of communication (SMC).¹ Here, the discussion will be focused primarily on two issues – *sahridayata* as a 'concept' firstly, and as a 'construct' secondly.

It is to note that the article is written as a part of the series of works on the SMC. In broader context, it not only continues the *Hinducentric* study of communication, but also makes contribution to what is sometimes referred as the *Asiacentric* School of communication theories (Chen, 2006; Dissanayake, 2009; Edmondson, 2009; Miike, 2008, 2010).

The concept

The concept *sahridayata* comes from the word *sahridaya*. Whereas the former refers to a quality, characteristic, or state of being or becoming, the latter names a person of that faculty. Thus, a *sahridaya* is one who has attained *sahridayata*.

According to Vidya Niwas Misra (2008, p. 97), the word *sahridaya* has two components: *saman* (same, equal, harmony, being) and *hridaya* (heart, becoming). He draws on the following Rigvedic sutra to clarify its meaning: "*Samani va aakutih saman hridayanivah saman mastu somano yatha vah susahasatih*," that is, "let our minds be in harmony, our hearts be in harmony, let our thinking be in harmony, our thought processes be in harmony so that we can live for a meaningful living of all-together" (ibid.).

¹ The article was originally entitled "*Sahridayata* in communication: From concept to the construct and beyond" and presented at the *Friday Lecture Series* in the Department of Languages and Mass Communication, Kathmandu University on September 17, 2010.

Misra (2008) draws on "Samanjasya Sukta" (*Atharvaveda* 6.64):

Live in harmony, in accord with each other, understanding each other, suffused with each other, with your hearts mingling as the Gods did, in the earlier times with an understanding of their interrelationship. That the Gods also desire that the mantras of the humans be the same. Similarly their meetings and interaction and being are same comprehending all their vows their consciousness pervading them is the same. Men invoke the Gods, with the same voice and vision, we invoke you, and supplicate you, let the same consciousness flows through us that our thoughts are the same, our hearts are the same and our minds are the same, so there can be greater accord between you and us. (qtd. in p. 72)

Misra emphasizes the need to understand the role of vak in the Hindu context of emotion in order to understand the Hindu poetic experience and the concept of *sahridaya* (p. 69). He has also drawn on two other concepts – *sakhya*, participatory communion, and *samvad*, a sounding together – while delineating the meaning of *sahridayata*.

Vedic teaching "Be humane and humanize others" (*Rigveda* – 10.53.6) is significant for understanding *sahridayata*. As Saraswati (2001, pp. 35-36) observes, Vedas instruct humans "that all people should be mutually bound with each other; each one affectionately attracting the other, the way a cow showers her love and affection for her new-born calf" (*Atharvaveda* – 3.30.1). And, everyone should look upon each other with a friend's eye (*Yajurveda* –36.18).

Sahridayas have "common sympathetic heart" (Yadava, 1998, p. 188). In other words, a *sahridaya* is a "person in state of emotional intensity, i.e. a quality of emotional dimension coequal to that of the sender of the message of communicator" (Kundra, n.d., p. 200). In such background, *sahridayata* can be considered as "social preparedness" that "entails living amongst

people, sharing their joys and sorrows but encompassing the entire humanity within, becoming a citizen of a world" (2008, p. 93). With such preparedness, universalization of *bhava* is possible and *rasa* experience is successful.

Aspects of *sahridayata* have been one of the major concerns of Sanskrit literary criticism. Kalidasa, Abhinava, Bhavabhuti, and Kuntaka, including others, have discussed about *sahridaya* and *sahridayata*, and emphasized on combination of both 'being' and 'becoming' in this regard.

Joshi (2001) has drawn on Abhinavagupta, who portrays the poet and the reader as components of one universe:

The poet, poetic activity and *sahridaya* form the three aspects of one universe, the world of artistic creation (Kavya-samsara). Abhinavagupta describes the poet and the *sahridaya* as the twin aspects of the goddess of learning. At one end of creative activity is the poet and at the other is the appreciator. The poet creates the world of poetry and the *sahridaya* enjoys it. (p. 101)

Whereas the poet is concerned with 'creation' of message and the appreciator is concerned with its appreciation. In fact, 'creation' and 'appreciation' are interrelated. It is *sahridayata* that keeps the poet (sender) and the reader (receiver) in the 'universe' and they become able to share the poem (message).

For Kalidasa, as Misra (2008) observes, *sahridayata* is to become *panyutsuk*, that is,

to be quickened to the ebb and flow of life. It is neither to give visual pleasure, nor to feast to the tune of pleasurable sound, it is an angst, an agitation which dislocates through its pain, the person comfortably ensconced in his genial environment, through, quickening him for a moment to the call and the pull from afar, as empathy is inevitable. (p. 94)

In this situation, "there is always a possibility of the mite of individual existence being driven away to merge with the universal desire" (ibid.).

For Bhavabhuti, *sahridayata* is the consciousness (*chaitanya*) given to the heart to experience joys and sorrows (p. 95). For Kuntaka, a *sahridaya* not only "can hear all the pulses, all the heartbeats that the outer world offers," but also "can conjoin the two impulses together of the excessive attachment of lover and the excessive detachment of the yogi" (pp. 101-102). Ideally, "Whoever is *sahridaya* has an intense concentrated memory, meditative *dhyana-yoga*, intellect, intense luminosity of creative and receptive faculty and the universe dissolves into this light to open anew" (Misra, 2008, p. 92).

In sum, *sahridayata* should be understood as

a poetic expression used for being or having common orientation. *Sahridaya* is not coterminous with predisposition in favor or against. It is much more than personality characteristics. It means identification of the 'communicator' with 'receiver' of communication. ...

The postulate is that the greater the identification the greater is the success of communication. (Yadava, 1998, p. 188)

It is culture that provides the basis for *sahridayata*. "This notion of *sahridaya* is not an elitist notion as even an illiterate or a rustic person can imbibe the quality" (Misra, 2008, p. 16). Thus, it is not something exclusive. However, it is not that anyone in any condition can become a *sahridaya*. The role of culture is crucial in the attainment of *sahridayata* and becoming of *sahridaya* (p. 101-102, 114).

Treating *sahridayata* as a state of being and becoming, which is within the reach of commons, seems in consonance with the Hindu worldview. It is not as exclusive faculty; however, it certainly has prerequisites. Culture sets the foundation of *sahridayata* on which an individual has to undergo a natural course of evolution.

The construct

The concept of *sahridayata*, along with the concept of *rasa*, should not be limited in the domain of drama, poetry and aesthetics only.² These concepts can be, and, in fact, have been, interpreted in the domain of modern communication discipline (Adhikary, 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2007a, 2007b, 2008b, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d, 2010e, 2010f, 2010g, 2010h, 2010i, 2011a, 2011b).³ In this course, the concept of *sahridayata* has been redefined and reinterpreted in order to designate the term for particular purpose in theorizing communication from Hindu perspective and presenting a model (the SMC). Thus, *sahridayata* is treated as a 'construct' – a combination of concepts, but with contextual import – thereby relating its exact meaning only to the context in which it is defined (Kerlinger, 2004; Wimmer and Dominick, 2003).

Hindu society is made up of complex relationships consisting of various – sometimes even conflicting – factors such as hierarchies of castes, social status, languages, cultures, and religious practices. In this background, asymmetrical relationships between communicating parties are prevalent in most of the cases. However, Hindus of different castes, social status, languages, cultures and religious cults are capable enjoying the very process of communication. Hindus have been able to receive and understand diverse, even contradictory, perceptions. Moreover, the ethics as conceived in Hinduism also envisions communion between communicating parties.

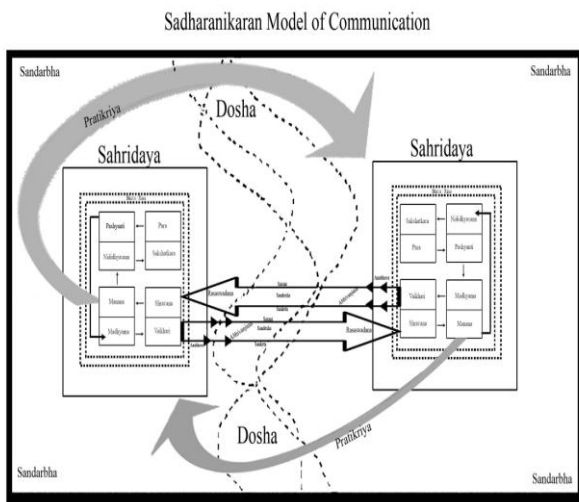
It implies that there exists *something* that is binding the people and facilitating communication. Any model of communication, which claims to be of Hindu perspective or worldview, should

² "the concept of *Rasa* cannot be limited to the dramatic experience, nor can the concept of the *sahridaya* be limited within it." (Misra, 2008, p. 130)

³ Also see: Acharya, 2011; Adhikary, 2008a, 2009c; Annapurna Shiksha, 2010; Jha, 2010a, 2010b; Khanal, 2008, pp. 21-22; Pant, 2009a, pp. 84-86, 2009b, p. 4, 2010, pp. 85-89.

be capable of identifying and incorporating that factor. In the SMC, the term *sahridayata* has been used to represent that factor, which binds the people as the communicating parties and facilitates the process of communication.

The introduction of the term *sahridayata* into communication is essentially due to its qualification in this regard. What had been said regarding *sahridaya* and *sahridayata* in the context of poetry is clearly sufficient for generalization to any form of communication. As it is done in other scientific disciplines also, there involves reinterpreting and/or redefining of the concept(s) and developing construct(s).



Whereas the concept(s) of *sahridayata* discussed and delineated in various Sanskrit texts envision an ideal state of being and becoming, the term as a 'technical term' in the SMC has been used in broader sense, and "refers to people with a capacity to send and receive messages" (Adhikary, 2009b, p. 74). Though ideally (as concept as discussed earlier) *sahridaya* is a person not only engaged in communication but also having attained a

 special state (*sahridayata*) it is not the only case in the framework of the SMC. Here, any parties engaged in communication and capable of identifying each other as sender and receiver of the process are also considered the *sahridayas*. It is to emphasize here that the SMC incorporates both the ideal (former) and general (latter) meanings of *sahridayata*.

In brief, *sahridayata*, as a 'technical term' or the 'construct', represents a wide range of relationship between communication parties. In the broadest sense, *sahridayas* are any such people who have capacity to send and receive messages. However, ideally, *sahridayata* is the state of common orientation, commonality or oneness, and *sahridayas* are those who have attained this state.

In the SMC, *sahridayata* provides explanation on how different communicating parties become able to pervade the unequal relationship prevailed in the society and the process of communication is facilitated. In other words, the term is meant to embody the sum of all those factors due to which the asymmetrical relationship between communicating parties does not hinder the two-way communication and hence mutual understanding.

Concluding remarks

As the construct, *sahridayata* is crucial in the SMC for ensuring the model being inherited with the Hindu ideal of communication for communion. Since its entitlement is as the *construct* its exact meaning relates to the context in which it is defined. However, its root is firmly established in earlier concept(s) from where it is drawn on. Thus, the term *sahridayata* has been used for designating all concepts and practices that are considered significant in ensuring communication for communion in Hindu society.

References

- Acharya, A. (2011). The sadharanikaran model of communication: An appraisal. An Independent Study submitted to the Department of Languages and Mass Communication, Kathmandu University, Nepal.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2003a, January 13). Communication in Nepali perspective. *Space Time Today*, p. 4.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2003b). Hindu awadharanama sanchar prakriya [Communication in Hindu concept]. A dissertation presented to Purvanchal University, Nepal in the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Mass Communication and Journalism.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2004). Hindu-sanchar siddhanta: Ek adhyayan. *Baha Journal*, 1, 25-43.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2007a). Sancharko Hindu awadharanatmak adhyayan. In N. M. Adhikary, *Sanchar shodha ra media paryavekshan* (pp. 93-138). Kathmandu: Prashanti Pustak Bhandar.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2007b). *Sancharyoga*: Verbal communication as a means for attaining *moksha*. A dissertation presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Pokhara University, Nepal in the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2008a). *Communication, media and journalism: An integrated study*. Kathmandu: Prashanti Prakashan.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2008b). The sadharanikaran model and Aristotle's model of communication: A comparative study. *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 2 (1), 268-289.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2009a). The sadharanikaran model of communication. Paper presented at the Asia Pacific Symposium on Communication Theories, February 10-12, New Delhi, India.

- Adhikary, N. M. (2009b). An introduction to sadharanikaran model of communication. *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 3(1), 69-91.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2009c). *Amsanchar ra patrakarita: Sanchar, media ra patrakaritako samasti adhyayan*. Kathmandu: Prashanti Prakashan.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2010a). Sadharanikaran model of communication and conflict resolution. Paper presented at the Third International Conference on Conflict Resolution and Peace, February 3-4, New Delhi, India.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2010b). Explorations within: Theorizing communication and positing media ethics paradigm from Hindu perspective. Paper presented at the Media Research Conference, March 25-26, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2010c). From 'globalization' to 'glocalization': An account of ongoing paradigm shift for communication studies in Nepal. Paper presented at the 2010 IAICS Convention, June 18-20, Guangzhou, China.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2010d). Fundamentals of sadharanikaran model of communication. *Media Newsletter*, 3(1), 2.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2010e). Communication and moksha-in-life. *Ritambhara: Journal of Nepal Sanskrit University Research Center*, 14, 183-195.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2010f). *Sanchariyoga: Approaching communication as a vidya in Hindu orthodoxy*. *China Media Research*, 6(3), 76-84.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2010g). *Sahridayata* in communication: From concept to the construct and beyond. Paper presented at the *Friday Lecture Series*, September 17, Department of Languages and Mass Communication, Kathmandu University, Dhulikhel, Nepal.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2010h). Teacher-student communication: Assertion and assessment. Available at <http://neltachoutari.wordpress.com/2010/10/01/teacher-student-communication-assertion-and-assessment/>

-
- Adhikary, N. M. (2010i). Vedic Hindu darshan ra sahridayata. http://www.dautari.org/2010/12/blog-post_16.html.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2011a). Sahridayata darshanko prakkathan. *Student's Concept*, 15, 23-26.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2011b). Theorizing communication: A model from Hinduism. In Y. B. Dura (Ed.), *MBM anthology of communication studies* (pp. 1-22). Kathmandu: Madan Bhandari Memorial College.
- Annapurna Shiksha. (2010, February 9). Nirmalamanikrit sadharanikaran. *Annapurna Shiksha* (supplement of *Annapurna Post* on Tuesdays), p. 6.
- Chen, G.-M. (2006). Asian communication studies: What and where to now. *Review of Communication*, 6(4), 295-311.
- Dissanayake, W. (2009). The desire to excavate Asian theories of communication: One strand of the history. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 4(1), 7-27.
- Edmondson, J. Z. (2009). Testing the waters at the crossing of post-modern, post-American and *fu-bian* flows: On the Asiatic school in international communication theories. *China Media Research*, 5(1), 104-112.
- Jha, J. (2010a, January 14). Sadharanikaran: Ekmatra purveli Hindu sanchar siddhanta. *Saptahik Bishwadeep*, p. 2.
- Jha, J. (2010b, November 18). Sahridayatako lagi sanchar. *Saptahik Bishwadeep*, p. 2.
- Joshi, N. (2001). *Some aspects of Sanskrit literature and literary criticism*. Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers.
- Kerlinger, F. N. (2004). *Foundations of behavioral research*. Delhi: Surjeet Publications.
- Khanal, S. (2008). *Aamsanchar ra patrakarita*. Kathmandu: Vidyarthi Pustak Bhandar.
- Kundra, S. (n.d.). *The process of communication*. New Delhi: Anmol Publications.
- Miike, Y. (2008). Toward an alternative metatheory of human communication: An Asiatic vision. In M. K. Asante, Y. Miike, & J. Yin (Eds.), *The global intercultural communication reader* (pp. 57-72). New York: Routledge.

-
- Miike, Y. (2010). An anatomy of Eurocentrism in communication scholarship: The role of Asiaticity in de-Westernizing theory and research. *China Media Research*, 6(1), 1-11.
- Misra, V. N. (2008). *Foundations of Indian aesthetics*. Gurgaon, Haryana: Shubhi Publications.
- Pant, L. D. (2009a). *Introduction to journalism and mass communication*. Kathmandu: Vidyarthi Prakashan.
- Pant, L. D. (2009b, November 24). The Hindu model of communication. *The Rising Nepal*, p. 4.
- Pant, L. D. (2010). *Appraisals versus introspections: An ethical perspective on fermenting Nepali media*. Kathmandu: Readmore.
- Saraswati, M. G. S. (2001). *Human rights and the Vedas*. New Jersey: Siddhartha and Milan.
- Wimmer, R. D., and Dominick, J. R. (2003). *Mass media research: An introduction*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Yadava, J. S. (1998). Communication research in India: Some reflections. In J. S. Yadava and P. Mathur (Eds.), *Issues in mass communication: The basic concepts* (pp. 177-195). New Delhi: IIMC.

Mr. Adhikary is Assistant Professor of Media Studies at the Department of Languages and Mass Communication, Kathmandu University and member of the UNESCO Steering Committee for the Media Development Indicators (MDI) Assessment Research 2011.