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## GROUPS AND LEADERSHIP

The purpose of describing group process is to familiarize you with the interpersonal context in which individuals interact with each other. The importance of a group is always felt whenever we are playing our role in our day-to-day social life. We use the word 'group' in various contexts such as games, political party, team for performing a task, committee members to decide about a programme, membership of an academic body or membership of the underprivileged group. We are born as an individual and we become members of various groups in the course of socialization. For fulfillment of our jobs we do become members of groups. This chapter would help you to understand the functioning of groups.



### OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- understand the importance of group in our life;
- recognize the characteristics of a group;
- know the way group dynamics operates;
- understand the effect of groups on our performance; and
- differentiate between formal and informal groups.

### 13.1 IMPORTANCE OF GROUPS IN OUR LIFE

Is human life possible without groups? Can we satisfy our needs, expectations, emotions, challenges, and crises without being members of groups? No, we cannot as groups are the basic components of society. The moment we are born into this world we immediately become a part of a group - our family. It is important to be group member as one's family fulfills certain essential needs and helps us to survive



in the social world. Each group has a commonsense view of the world and as the baby grows s/he learns what is expected of him/her to become a productive member of the group. Soon the young child comes to acquire a sense of 'self' and comes to develop a personality. Groups like family help to transmit culture of one's society by the process of socialization. Groups also teach us thoughts and behaviors. Also if one is a member of a sports team, cricket or football, then we know that each member must obey rules and regulations.

In early years of life the family supports us, and then as we move on to school and college we get the support of various social, academic, and professional groups. We can be member of various groups such as political, religious, ethnic, sports, music, and cultural that allow us to pursue our needs and goals. Such groups help us to make our life more meaningful and comfortable. We cannot live and grow as an isolated individual moments reflection will tell you that group life allows us to fulfill social and emotional needs. These include recognition, affiliation, security, prestige, identity, sense of belongingness, and status. Groups also allow us to meet our task related need such as goal achievement. Indeed groups are central to human life.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.1

1. Why do people join groups? List the names of the groups that you belong to.

## 13.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GROUP

A group is collection of individuals who work together so as to contribute towards a common aim or goal under the direction of a leader. Groups share common characteristics and have a social structure as in religious groups, caste groups, community groups of business men, sportsmen and so on. The characteristics of a group are as follows:

- Members define themselves as group members and have a strong 'we feeling' a psychological feeling of belonging to each other. Do you have a group of friends that you are fond of? Do you not feel close to each other? Yes you are likely to support each other in every day life.
- Group members are engaged in frequent interaction and they affect the behavior of each other. Do you meet your friends frequently? It helps you to know how the group is moving ahead in its goal.
- Further, group members share common norms and mutual interests and values. They depend upon each other and rely for fulfillment of their needs and the survival of the group.

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- Members of a group are aware of rules and regulations that are to be followed, as it helps maintain order and discipline. Does your mother ask you to talk softly while your elder brother is studying for an exam? Or that you must help in washing the dishes after having dinner?
- Groups vary in size. They can be large or small. A family can consist of four members or a traditional joint family can consist of 50 members or more! A political party can be of 100 members or of a few thousands.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.2

1. State whether the following are examples of a group:
  - a. People crossing a street
  - b. Religious gathering
  - c. People standing at a bust stop
  - d. Birthday party
  - e. Political club
2. Describe the important features of a group.

## 13.3 GROUP DYNAMICS

The behavior of one member influences the behavior of other members in the group. This process of influencing each other's behavior pattern in a group is called group dynamics. Group dynamics is affected by factors of individual personality, social situation and cultural traditions. Group dynamics varies in different kinds of group situations.

### Cohesiveness

Cohesiveness refers to the shared perspective which binds the members of a group or community. At the time of external threat people have a tendency to fight unitedly to ward off the common threat. During war times this feeling of togetherness soars because of common threat perceived by the group. For example, when terrorists attacked Mumbai Taj Hotel on 26/11/2008 the people of Mumbai united forgetting regional, linguistic and community differences.

### Conformity

It is important to understand the concept of conformity while describing group processes. Conformity is getting affected by how the behaviours of others change

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our own behavior by changing our beliefs. Conformity can be of two types. Sometimes we conform to others without believing it. This type of outward conformity is called **compliance**. If our compliance is to an explicit command or acting in accordance with a direction - it is called obedience. The sincere inward conformity is a process when we are genuinely convinced and it is called acceptance. For instance, it is suggested that morning walk is useful for health and we start doing so.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.3

1. What is the process of group dynamics?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. With the help of examples describe cohesiveness and conformity.  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 13.4 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “US” AND “THEM”

Do you not like your friends more as compared to other peers in your social world? And, if you are a sports fan do you not like to cheer for your home during match rather than for the visitor’s team? Yes, we have a more positive attitude towards our group. There is a natural tendency of humans to form groups based on common identity. We use our identity with our groups, often called in-group, to evaluate others, termed as out-group, even when it leads to forming incorrect conclusions. We tend to evaluate the out-group as being more similar to each other than the in-group, for example, people say “They are all the same”. We are also likely to exaggerate the differences between ‘us’ and ‘them’, thus we are likely to say, “They are so very different from us”. This type of social categorization becomes associated with stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. When we link negative attitudes towards other groups and differentiate between ‘us’ and ‘them’ we start creating a boundary that separates the groups. This labeling makes the ‘them’ group to be less human. Violent and evil acts are common against those whom we have a prejudice.

We tend to categorize people on the basis of shared characteristics. We automatically categorize people on the basis of sex, age, and religion. Why do we categorize people into ‘us’ and ‘them’? We categorize people because it is a quick and easy way of dealing with people. Categorization has an adaptive function. Responding to every person as an individual would create an overload on the perceiver’s cognitive assessment of the person. However, if we have enough time and information then we tend to make a more accurate perception of the person or group.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.4

- (i) Describe the important differences between “us” and “them”?
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### Group’s Effect on Performance

The effect of a group on performance can be positive or negative. There are some important concepts that can help us understand the effect of groups.

### Social Facilitation

We are affected by the mere presence of another person. Mere presence means that people are not competing with each other and they are present as a passive audience or co-actors. Does our normal activities of eating and playing are affected by mere presence of others? In our daily life we can notice such differences in our behavior. It is found that cyclists or joggers in a park times are faster when racing or moving together than doing alone against the clock. It has also been found that social arousal facilitates performance.

### Social Loafing

Social loafing is the tendency of people in a group to exert less effort towards a common goal. When they are individually accountable contrary to common notion “in unity there is strength” group members are actually less motivated when reward is equally divided and the task is less challenging, appealing or involving. In contrast people in a group are likely to loaf less when the task is appealing and member’s identify with the group.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.5

1. Explain the term social facilitation?  

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2. Explain the term ‘social loafing’.  

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Social facilitation is a process by which people are aroused in a group and leads to better performance. Social loafing refers to diffused responsibility. It means that members of the group do not put in the necessary effort to achieve the goal or task. Have you played the game ‘tug of war’ with a rope? Have you noticed that people in



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the front are putting in effort and are pulling the rope, whereas people at the tail end, are just holding the rope? Yes, social loafing is common when one's effort is not being measured or rewarded.

### Group Size

The bigger the group size the more its members lose self-awareness and in an aroused state are more likely to commit mob atrocities of looting, burning or lynching. An aroused mob enables its members to believe they will not be persecuted, they perceive the action as that of groups.

### Group Polarization

When a group has to make a decision, the members meet. It is noticed that while the discussion is going on, there is a strong tendency for the group decision to shift to be more extreme and risky. When one holds a given opinion or position with regard to a topic, then during a group discussion information supporting one's view points helps us to validate our beliefs and opinions. This shift from a position of no or little risk to an extreme position is termed as 'group polarization'. This happens because group members may get new information and more persuasive arguments.

### Group Think

Group think refers to group-induced distortions that do not allow objective considerations of all the possible alternatives. It takes place when a cohesive group remains isolated from dissenting viewpoints. The presence of a directive leader who signals what decision he or she favors also contributes to it. The group think phenomenon occurs due to illusion of invulnerability, unquestioned belief in the group's morality, rationalization and conformity pressure.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.6

1. Describe the factors that influence group work?

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2. Describe the harmful effect of group polarization?

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### 13.5 FORMAL AND INFORMAL GROUPS

Groups are of various types. One major categorization is of formal and informal groups. Groups that are established for a specific purpose are called **formal groups**. This type of group is usually formed to meet clearly defined goals. The examples of formal groups include student projects groups, committees, boards or commissions.

**Informal groups** on the other hand form naturally out of interaction among individuals overtime. Informal groups may emerge out of formal groups with members having similar ideas, values, beliefs and social needs. For instance, Indian National Congress, Rotary Club started as small informal groups but with time became formal groups. Spontaneous interaction of likeminded people aimed towards achieving a common goal may give rise to the formation of informal groups. Membership of any group depends on many things. Some of the important factors include importance, common motive, socio-economic background, cultural aspiration, poverty, deprivation, and job security. Attitude similarity and external factors of situation and leadership characteristics also play an important role in the formation of groups.

### 13.6 GROUP DEVELOPMENT

Newly formed groups show different behaviors than groups that have been together for sometime. This is because a group progresses through reversal stages of development. Groups progress through the following stages: forming, storming, initial integration and performing stage.

#### Forming Stage

When a group is formed, a number of issues are decided. Before joining a group, people ask various questions including Who can become a member? What are the roles one has to play as members? What the group can offer me? How can I contribute to the group? In the first stage the group defines its behavior for the members and finalise the goals of the group.

#### Storming Stage

In this stage members feel comfortable to express their feelings. Differences in attitudes and needs are widely noticed during this stage. The internal and external demands create conflicts among the members. If conflicts are ignored, members develop bitterness and that may damage the group's ability to perform.

#### Initial Integration Stage

The members in this stage develop an initial sense of closeness and belonging. By this stage the rules are finalised which till the way group members will operate. The members in this stage start co-operating to each other.



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### Performing Stage

In this stage the group starts functioning as an effective unit. By this stage the group members learn well as to how to get along with each other. The roles of members are decided and the leadership issues are settled by now. The group starts pursuing its goals. Most of the members at this stage are satisfied with the group.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.7

1. State the various stages of group development.

### 13.7 LEADERSHIP

It is often said that “the youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow.” Leaders in the various walks of life are very popular. The images of leaders in sports, politics, cinema, business are brought to our notice through mass-media. There are different success stories behind every successful leader and there is no single accepted quality of becoming successful leader. The socio-cultural tradition, and politico-economic situation are some of the important determinants of leadership. Success in family, business, school, country or the military is often attributed to the quality of leadership. In today’s work environment, the melting away of national and geographical boundaries via computerisation and Internet has created greater need for global leadership. The importance of leading in diverse environments has become more important in today’s context. Leadership is defined as ability to influence others to achieve certain goals. A good leader can significantly influence the behaviour, attitude and performance of the followers.

### 13.8 QUALITIES OF A LEADER

If Gandhi is an example of social leader, Narayan Murthy is an example of professional leader and Buddha, Christ, Gurunanak are examples of religious leaders. Initiative and dominance are important in the leadership process. Leaders are heard and accepted by a sizeable number of the people. Their followers involve communication and the authority of such leaders is accepted by them.

The qualities required to be a successful leader varies from place to place, culture to culture, and situation to situation. There are leaders in specialized fields such as Sachin Tendulkar in cricket, Ratan Tata in business and Abinav Bindra in shooting but they are not recognized as mass leaders. Successful leadership in a particular field and leadership of the mass social spectrum are different. The main psychological



attributes of a leader are as follows:

- leaders are aware of the abilities of their followers.
- leaders have good communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal.
- leaders accept personal responsibilities and set examples for group members.
- leaders have ability to understand the situation.
- leaders are good planners, visionary and trustworthy.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.8

1. Identify the qualities of a leader

## 13.9 THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP

There are many theories of leadership and important among them are the following:

Early views of leadership described that leaders are born. According to this theory some people are born with the traits of leadership and possess inherent properties to become leader. Subsequently many theories were developed.

**A. Trait Approach :** This approach attempts to tell which personal characteristics lead to effective leadership. It has been found that the following are major traits of leaders:

Belief in oneself (self-confidence), along with openness to the ideas of others, a passion for the job and a drive that set an example for others, love of people, acceptance of others, maturity and responsibility and desire to achieve goals are other relevant leadership traits.

**B. Behavioral of Approach:** It has been noted that successful leaders exhibit two types of behaviours, task centered and employee-centered. Task orientation relate to the quality and the quantity of work. On the other hand, employee-centered orientation focuses on meeting the personal needs of the group members.

**C. Situational Approach:** We often notice that situational variables play important role in effective leadership. The effectiveness of a particular style of leadership behaviour depends on the situation. As situation changes different leadership styles become appropriate.

**D. Path-Goal Approach:** Path-goal theory focuses on how leaders influence



followers' expectations. According to it leader behaviour is acceptable when followers view it as a source of satisfaction or showing the way to future satisfaction. The four styles of leadership identified by path-goal theory are as follows:

- (i) Directive style provides guidance to followers about what should be done and how to do it.
- (ii) Supportive style is primarily concerned with establishing interpersonal relations with the followers.
- (iii) Participative style believes that follower participation improves the quality of decisions.
- (iv) Achievement oriented style sets challenging goals for the followers. Minimal supervision is required with this style of leadership.

**E. Charismatic Leadership :** This kind of leadership focuses on the interpersonal transaction between leaders and followers. Leaders are engaged in behaviours that maintain a quality interaction between themselves and followers. The main characteristics of these leaders are as follows:

- They offer an unusual or far-out vision of reality.
- They make sacrifices or take risks to further their vision.
- They use unconventional methods to achieve their goals.
- They communicate with confidence.

Charismatic leadership transforms followers by creating changes in their goals, values, needs, belief and aspirations. They accomplish this transformation by appealing to followers selves.



### WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Two or more persons interacting for some time having common goal constitute a group. Group is required to satisfy our individual needs and expectations.
- Importance of group processes can be understood with the help of factors like competitiveness, cohesiveness and co-operation that lead to enhanced performance and productivity.
- Group processes help understanding the different aspects of group behavior at village, caste and community levels.
- At the organizational level productivity can be immensely improved by strengthening the group diversity and its energy.
- Humans are so complex that we have a number of theories describing leadership.

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- Great men theory of leadership suggests that certain people are born to become leaders but this view has become outdated.
- According to trait theory there are certain physical, social and psychological characteristics that one needs to become a leader.
- The situational theory prescribes that we should understand traits and behaviour not in isolation, but in the context of a situation.
- Charismatic theory proposes a visionary approach and use of unconventional methods in achieving goals.
- Leadership is one of the most talked about topic even in our day to day life and a better understanding of this topic will be of great use in our practical and professional life.



### TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Describe various advantages of being a group member.
2. What is group dynamics?
3. Describe psychological attributes of leadership.
4. How would you go about demonstrating leadership if you were the new president of a company?



### ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

#### 13.1

Satisfaction of needs, identity, belongingness, development of self and personality, socialization, discipline, goal achievement.

#### 13.2

1.
  - a. No
  - b. Yes
  - c. No
  - d. Yes
  - e. Yes

## MODULE - IV

### *Social Psychological Processes*



### Notes



2. Work together, common aim, share common characteristics, we-feeling, frequent interaction, rules, regulations, size.

**13.3**

1. Influence each other, cohesiveness, conformity products of group dynamics.
2. Cohesiveness binds people together, common threat.  
conformity, change in behaviour, compliance, order or command.

**13.4**

1. In group, out - group, social categorization, prejudice, discrimination, labeling.

**13.5**

1. Effect on performance due to audience presence, arousal.
2. Diffused responsibility, low effort, effort not measured or rewarded.

**13.6**

1. Group size, polarization, group think.

**13.7**

1. Forming, storming, integration, performing.

**13.8**

1. Initiative, dominance, communication, understanding, visionary, planner.

**Hints for Terminal Questions**

1. Refer to section 13.1
2. Refer to section 13.3
3. Refer to section 13.8
4. Refer to section 13.9