Working Paper

GROUPS IN ORGANIZATIONS

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Groups in Organizations

A Business Manager of a Calcutta based company, recently described a typical day in his life.

9.30 - 9.45 a.m.	-	Arrive at work, review E-mail.
10.00 - 10.30 a.m.	-	Dictate letters, messages, make calls.
10.40 - 11.40 a.m.	-	Meetings with Chambers of Commerce Executives.
11.40 - 12.30 a.m.	-	Meeting with Purchase committee to discuss strategic items procurement.
12.35 - 01.20 p.m.	-	Conference with Senior Managers of the Company.
01.30 - 02.30 p.m.	-	Lunch with Equipment suppliers.
02.35 - 03.30 p.m.	-	Meeting with Product Managers and Executives.
03.35 - 04.35 p.m.	-	Work alone in office/Handle mail/message
04.35 - 05.30 p.m.	-	Task Force Meeting.
05.40 - 06.30 p.m.	-	Work alone in office/Give instruction to Secretary for the next day.
06.40 - 07.30 p.m.	-	Play lawn tennis at the nearby Sports Club with friends.
7.40 - 10.00 p.m.	-	Relax with family / Visit friends/ Professional Meetings over dinner.

How did this executive spend his time? He spent less than two hours working alone. The rest of it he spent working and interacting with people in various groups. The schedule reveals ten groups that he is either a member of or deals with: Chamber of Commerce Executives, Purchase Committee, Conference with Suppliers, Lunch Group, Product Manager & Executives, Task Force Meeting, Lawn tennis group, family and coprofessionals. One can identify other groups that he will be interacting with during a work week which were not included on this day. These could include among others Union Officials, HRD Manager and his team, interest groups, charities and NGO's. If groups take up such a substantial portion of an executive's time, it will be worthwhile for him to understand group behaviour and its dynamics.

A. What is a Group

A GROUP is defined as consisting of two or more people who interact regularly to accomplish a common purpose or goal. There are three basic components of this definition:

a. There must be at least two people involved for a group to exist. There can be no group of one.

b. The individuals must interact regularly if they are to constitute a group.

c. Group members must have a common goal or purpose.

The minimum number of members needed for a group to exist is two. Although there is no upper limit, when the size increases beyond a certain point, usually around 12 - 15, it breaks up into subgroups.

Interactions in the group need not follow a set pattern, but interaction must occur. The necessity for interaction is a primary reason for the upper limit in group size. When a group becomes too large, it is difficult for a member to interact with all other members. Thus, face to face interaction lowers and this results in the formation of smaller groups.

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The group members must have a common goal/purpose. This may range from preparing a new advertising campaign or informally sharing information, or fulfilling social needs.

A collection of five people waiting for a bus is clearly not a group, even though more than two people are involved and they share the same goal. By the same token, mess workers and students may interact regularly, but they may still not be a group. Thus commonality of goal or purpose and interaction become the primary factors in distinguishing between a group and a collectivity. It also helps identify the boundaries of a group.

Not every gathering is a group. There is a distinction between a group and a collectivity. While a group has a common goal, a collectivity is an adhoc assembly of people, that happens to be together and is usually drawn together by some impulse. Crowds and Mobs are examples of a collectivity which is large, heterogenous and of a temporary nature.

Collectives are spontaneously organized groups which contain a varying number of people in physical proximity of one another over a brief period of time. Collectivities provide inter stimulation to members through which some decision and action may occur. Ticket queues, Crowds and Mobs are examples of collectives.

B.   Why Study Groups?

To a student of management study of groups may appear somewhat too theoretical. But is it really so?   Let us examine the case of an executive on his new assignment.

The East Hampton Plant

Ted Lofton was aghast. He had just completed his first inspection of the plant and had seen so many problems he did not know where to begin. This was Ted's first major management position and he knew that his future with the company depended on how he handled this job. The East Hampton plant had a reputation in the company as a real trouble spot. He knew that if he could get things straightened out, he would be on his way to the top.

And suddenly, Ted knew just where to begin. When he had toured the plant, he found Section C quite weird and shocking. There were five older women there, who had turned the office into a living room. Whereas everyone else had worked at tables arranged in neat rows, these five had their tables arranged in a circle. They had put down a carpet and even hung some pictures on the wall. They had stashed a small refrigerator off to one side and kept a radio playing music. Ted did not understand why they needed the radio, though. They talked incessantly and could not possibly have heard anything. And, Ted was sure, the talking and other distractions was hurting productivity. Yes, Ted thought, that is where he will begin.

Late that evening, after everyone else had left. Ted sent a maintenance crew down to section C. He had them unplug the radio and refrigerator and set them in a corner. The carpet was rolled up, the pictures taken off the wall, and the work tables arranged in a neat straight line.

The next morning, Ted fully expected the women to come storming into his office, and he was prepared to deal with them. He was surprised, however, when they simply sat down and went to work. He was equally surprised to find three days later that

output from section C was down 75%. He immediately raced to the floor to find out how the women were cutting back, but he could not find any evidence that they were working at anything but maximum efficiency.

Ted next went back to his office and did something he realized he should have done much earlier. He looked at the performance records of the five women. Three pieces of information was especially enlightening. The women had worked together in the same section for over fifteen years, and they consistently produced at the rate of 70 to 80 per cent above the standard established for their jobs. Finally, their supervisor had noted several times in their files that they were all very dedicated and committed employees.

As much as he hated to admit it, Ted had to face the fact that he had made a serious blunder. After a couple of hours of building up his nerve, Ted walked down to section C, he apologized for what he had done and helped the women rearrange their work area the way it was before. The next day, he was pleased to find that productivity was once again up to its previous level.

Group Atmosphere, which the case highlights, is the emotional feelings which characterize a group, which was disrupted by Ted Lofton's actions. The case shows how group behaviour and interactions can facilitate or hinder group performance, and how its disruption can hinder performance.

East Hampton could have been Poorvanchal Industries and Ted Lofton could have been Tekchand. Had Lofton understood the dynamics of group behaviour and performance, he would not have jumped to the conclusions that talking and other distractions would automatically lower productivity. Perhaps, even his initial reactions would also not be so impulsive.

C.   Why Do Individuals Join Groups?

There are a variety of reasons why an individual joins a group. Different groups provide different types of benefits to various individuals. The fundamental reasons for joining groups, however, are embedded in satisfaction of certain basic human needs like security, identity, affiliation, power, engaging in common activities etc. None of these needs can be satisfied individually. Let us briefly examine, how groups can satisfy some of these needs.

i. *Affiliation*: "I am very well-off and I really don't care about the money I get, yet I won't leave my job". "why?" "Well! I like the people I work with, and I'd rather come to work than stay alone at home". This very common statement verifies that groups satisfy our social needs. People enjoy the regular interaction which groups provide. Many join clubs and association. Similarly, affiliation is also provided by on-the-job interactions. For almost all people, work groups contribute in fulfilling their need for friendships and social relations.

ii. *Security*: A corollary to the above need to join groups is security, as there is strength in numbers. By joining a group, one can reduce the feeling of standing alone, have fewer self doubts, and be more resistant to threats. New and young employees are more susceptible to a sense of isolation and turn to groups for guidance and support. But whether one is new or old, everyone,and more particularly the vulnerable individuals get reassurances from interaction with others and being part of a group. This also explains the appeal of unions and associations as it leads to a reduction in the feelings of insecurity.

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iii. *Identity, Self Esteem and Status*: A certain kind of self esteem fillip is provided by joining a recognised group like a Sports team, a Missionary Group or A Student Council or a leading social club. Self esteem is bolstered ever higher when the individual is accepted and recognized by a more valued group like the national team, a global missionary organization or a student committee that has been assigned the responsibility of organizing inter-collegiate festival. Additionally, feelings of competence and growth are satisfied when one joins a group and is asked to contribute to a meaningful task.

iv. *Power*: Some tasks which are not possible through individual influence can be completed quickly when the backing of a group is available. This is specially true if the group is perceived as powerful. In effect, a part of the group power gets transformed to the individual. Thus even a weak member of a gang is feared because of his membership.

v. *Group Tasks*: There are certain tasks which are achievable only through group effort. For example it would be quite difficult for any individual, howsoever skilful, to scale mount everest, all by himself. He will have to join a mountaineering team. Similarly if an executive wants to improve quality of output for a task on which many people are working, he will have to work with the group, perhaps through a quality circle.

D.   Types of Groups

Groups can be classified in several ways. Generally, four taxonomies have been used. These are:

Primary Vs. Secondary
Formal Vs. Informal
Competing Vs. Cooperating
Outgroups Vs. Ingroups

Primary Vs. Secondary Groups

Primary Groups are those groups in which there is no membership choice. In a family, for example membership is automatic. This kind of group provides the first personality formative social experience, impressions and learning processes to an individual.

Secondary Groups, on the other hand, are groups which an individual chooses to join on his own. Examples would include clubs, associations, and organizations.

Formal Groups

Formal Groups are specifically de signed for furtherance of a goal. Organizational Groups are an example of formal groups. Their creation represents an attempt by the owners to further goals of profit and growth. Some formal groups, including organizations, continue in operation for very long periods of time, during which individuals may enter or leave the group, but the structure and functions of the group remains relatively constant.

Formal groups are often characterized by a *Command Group/Line Group*, which is usually at the top of the hierarchy and is perceived as a source of authority in the structure of the group. A Command group, for example, may be composed of subordinates who report directly to the owner manager. Command Groups are also called Line Groups, when they have line authority in the formal organization. They are given authority to take decisions and implement them and handle important routine activities like approval of financial budgets, policy reviewed and so on. In some organizations,

they may be chartered in the constitution of the organization and are thus permanent groups. Key terms to line groups are direct authority, permanency and major controlling activities.

Task Groups also known as adhoc groups are concerned with a special purpose and project teams set up by the organization for limited duration are examples of formal task groups. Once the project is over, the group is disbanded. A task group's boundaries, however are not limited to its immediate organization and it can cross command relationships. It should be noted that all command groups are also task groups, but because task groups can cut across the organization, the reverse need not be true.

Like Task groups *committees* do not necessarily have line authority. While Task Groups are organized for special purposes, committees are more permanent and membership is based on organizational roles and priorities. The task group membership is based on expertise.

Executive Team, is yet another kind of formal group. Many times decision making has to be taken by a team of executives, specially when problems are too pervasive to be dealt with, by one individual, organizations create Executive Team. This refers to a team of specialists, with in an organization, who collaborate together to complete a project. Team Executive approach is common in Indian organizations where a, managing director may collaborate with four Vice Presidents in charge of Finance, Marketing, Exports, Operations, Human Resource Development to make many high level decisions for the organization.

An individual can simultaneously be a member of two or more formal groups. The fact that such groups are specified by the organization in no way precludes multiple membership - and, thus, multiple influences on the individual's behaviour. Indeed, almost every individual above the lowest level of the enterprise is the member of at least two such groups. First, he is a member of the group over which he is the supervisor or boss, and second, he is a member of another group in which he is one of the subordinates. This kind of multiple formal group-membership role has been termed by Likert as *"linking pin"* role. The implication of linking pin concept is that any supervisor or manager who fails to take into account his duality of roles will usually find that he has created difficulties for both himself and the organization.

Multiple-formal group membership is not confined to just the superior-subordinate relationship. Frequently, a person will find himself in a situation where he has at least two superiors to report to and thus he is a member of two different subordinate groups, or conversely when an individual is a member of one or more project groups.

Informal Groups

Informal groups form an integral part of organizations and all organizations have both formal and informal groups, even a small office with say, ten or fifteen employees may contain several different informal groups. Informal groups are alliances that are neither structural nor externally determined. These groups are natural formations in a given environment, which appear in response to the need for social contact. Examples would include a few individuals regularly travelling in the same bus or in a sub-urban train gravitating together to pass time.

Similarly, communication pattern may be formed by a set of individuals who may or may not be close friends, but who have voluntarily developed certain types of interactions for the purpose of exchanging various types of information from one person to another.

Another type of Informal Groups are *Friendship Groups*. Friendship groups can be based on similarity of age, or having attended the same college or holding the same political views.

An individual may, simultaneously belong to several such informal social groups. The number of informal groups within an organization tends to be rather large relative to the total number of individuals employed by it. Furthermore, their boundaries, in terms of who is or is not a member are often blurred. Informal groupings, have a tremendous impact on the behaviour of the individual member of the organization.

There are certain other kinds of groups, like *Interest groups* which are formed when individuals come together due to commonality of concerns. Examples would be environment group, women's liberation group or freedom fighters group. Employees who band together to support a peer who has been fired. or to seek increased fringe benefits, represent the formation of a united body to further their common interest. This way, what originates is an informal group which can take the shape of a formal group.

Informal Groups provide a very important service by satisfying their members' social needs. Due to interactions, which result from the close proximity of work stations or task interactions, we find workers going shopping together, playing golf, lunching together and so on. We must recognize that these types of interactions among individuals, even though informal, deeply affect their behaviour and performance in organizations.

For instance, major decisions regarding important deals may be influenced by the needs of persons who are informally close to the managing director of the organization or conversely grapevine from informal groups may tip off a competitor in advance about R & D of a new product.

Informal groups are helpful to the organization when they are designed to further the goals of organization. A group of five employees who share their skills to improve a project plan is beneficial to the company, but if the same group plans to sabotage a new product launch, then this kind of an informal group becomes an hinderance to organizational effectiveness. This may happen when employees are dissatisfied by the decisions of the command groups. To avoid such a pitfall, organizations often co-opt/promote informal group leaders to formal group positions. This way the informal group lender make the informal group goals compatible to those of the organization's.

Competing/Cooperating Groups: Distinction between competing and cooperating groups is however more complicated and is based on the nature of member behaviour, i.e., interaction process, as also by the scarcity/non scarcity of resources. From a psychological viewpoint, *competition* involves a goal which, being scarce, cannot be shared or appears unsharable to the individuals concerned. If, for example, buyers' funds are limit ed, sellers who wish to obtain those funds compete with one another. *Cooperation*, on the other hand, involves a goal which, regardless of its scarcity, can be shared or appears to be sharable. Workers cooperate with one another and with management, the goal of producing the finished product is one that is sharable, in fact it is one that is presumably unattainable unless the efforts of all are coordinated.

Competing/Cooperating affect the behaviour of individuals in group situations. Whether an individual competes or cooperates, depends on (i) the strength of the drive toward the goals to be attained by competing or cooperating. (ii) other drives that may be assured in the social situation, for example, working with peers arouses competition, while working with superior may account for cooperation, and (iii) the social rules that govern the two modes of behaviour. If the resources for goal attainment are scarce, the rules of the society or the group will determine whether the behaviour will be competitive or cooperative.

Outgroups Vs. Ingroups: Behaviour of individuals in a group may be affected by an *OUT- GROUP*, specially when they perceive that the out-group in some way or the other appears to challenge their

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own welfare or that of their group, their overall performance is likely to improve, their sense of belongingness to be augmented, the atmosphere in which they function to become more congenial and the degree of their participation in their own group to increase. Intergroup competition, in brief, promotes intergroup cooperation.

An *OUT-GROUP*, is an organization of people who are perceived to be different from the group in which the individual is participating at a given moment. The same people in one context may be considered an out-group and in another, a part of the *in-group*. Trade Union and Management can be considered here. Union perceives management as out group and the same goes for the management too. The inhabitants think of themselves as distinctive of their rival. But both also belong to the same state, and feel certain bonds in common whenever this larger group is praised or condemned.

The *IN-GROUP*, can be said to begin with the self, and it is gradually extended to include more and more people as similarities and dissimilarities between them and the self are perceived. The similarities and dissimilarities are taught during socialization and reinforced thereafter, so that most enduring in-groups are differentiated not on the basis of direct experience but as a result of the cultural heritage. Less enduring ingroups arise as the situation demands. The individual who motivates himself by trying to improve his own record on successive occasions, is in real sense his own in-and-outgroup.

Clubs and associations are also a form of ingroup. Almost any organization contains a variety of clubs and associations which depend for their continued existence upon their ability to attract new members. For instance there can be a sports club, music club or a literary association or a club based on regional membership in a big organization. Formally or informally, initiates are required to agree to follow the tenets and practices of groups that they join. Presumably, therefore, people join a group because they are in agreement with those tenets and practices.

E.   Group Processes are the dimensions of group behaviour that need to be studied to understand the group as a phenomenon. These include:

        a.   Stages of Group Development
        b.   Group Structure
        c.   Group Cohesiveness
        d.   Analysis of Group Interaction
        e.   Understanding Group Behaviour

A brief focus on each of these, clarifies the group processes involved here.

a.   Stages of Group Development: There has been strong evidence that groups pass through a standard sequence of four stages (Tuckman 1965) in its evolution. These are:

(i)   *Forming*: This is the first stage of development and there is a great deal of uncertainty about the groups' purpose, structure and leadership. Members are not sure about what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. This is a period of testing and dependence or forming. Members are very dependent on others at this point to provide acceptable cues of behaviour. The basic ground rules for the group are established and a tentative group structure may emerge. This stage draws to a close when members feel more settled in a group and slowly start identifying with the group.

(ii)   *Storming:* This is the stage where the conflicting interests of the group come to the fore. Members accept the existence of the group but there is some resistance to the form of influence the group exerts on the individuals. There is also conflict as to who will be the leader. Group members

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resist the structure that has begun to emerge. Each member wants to retain his/her individuality. There may be a general lack of unity, and patterns of interaction are uneven. Some group members start asserting their authority. When stage II completes, there will be a clear hierarchy of leadership within the group.

(iii)   *Norming*: When the process of the group is smooth and it unites together into relatively a cohesive whole, it is at the Norming stage. There is a strong sense of group identity, friendliness and collaboration in the group. Norming stage is complete when there is a continuing structure for the group and the group has evolved a common set of acceptable member behaviour and there is a definitive sense of unity in the group.

(iv)   *Performing*: The final stage of the group development is performing. The structure at this point is fully functional and accepted. Group synergy moves towards the task to be performed, and the group focuses on the problem at hand. The members play the accepted roles, interact with each other, and try to attain the group goal.

It would be apt to note that the movement through stages is not always clear. Many times, in fact two or three stages may develop simultaneously or the group may regress to previous stages. Thus it is wrong to assume that these developmental processes are followed precisely by all groups,but rather it is a general frame work for group dynamics.

b.   Group Structure: In order to enable manager's to analyze groups, it is very important to understand group structure. The foundation of which is found in *Role Dynamics, norms & status in the groups*, each of these is elaborated below:

i)   *Role Dynamics*: Roles in a group are quite similar to the one used in a theatrical sense, and each individual in a group plays one or more of these roles. Some people are leaders, some are workers, some interface with other groups, and so on. Further, each of us belongs to many groups and therefore play multiple roles - in work groups, classes, families and social organizations (*Katz and Kahn 1978*).

The process of role dynamics begins with the *expected role*, the individuals's expected role gets translated into the *sent role*, which consists of the messages and cues that group members use to communicate the expected role to the individual. The perceived role is what the individual perceives, the sent role to mean. Finally the *enacted role* is what the individual actually does in the role, and the enacted role, in turn influences future expectations of the group.

At each of these steps, problems and distortions may arise, the cues may be wrong, which reflect group member's expectations, the individual who is receiving these cues may not perceive the cues correctly due to differences in experience or frames of reference. The result of these breakdowns may lead to breakdowns in role development and may include *role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload*.

Role ambiguity may arise when the sent role is unclear. It can stem from poor job descriptions, vague instructions from a supervisor, or unclear cues from co-workers. This may lead to a worker who does not know what to do.

Role conflict occurs when the instructions are clear but the role is contradictory for e.g. if a person's boss has instructed one to work on weekends too, but at the same time one's spouse needs the person at house on weekends. This will lead to conflict, within the person, as he\she wouldn't know what to do, but this kind of a conflict can be soon resolved by the person.

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Role overload occurs when the expectations for that role exceed the individual's capabilities. When a manager gives an employee several major assignments at once. This employee would be under immense pressure to finish his/her assignments and would experience "Role overload' conflict.

(ii)   *Group Norms*: A major feature of group is their norms. Norms are standards of behaviour that the group accepts for its members, and through these norms, groups influence individual behaviour. Most committees in government offices, for example, develop norms governing their discussions. If only an individual does, most of the talking, others just withdraw back and concentrate on the eatables around. A "who cares"/passive attitude is given by following this norm.

Norms define the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Some groups develop norms that limit the upper bounds of behaviour to make life simple and easy for the group. In general, these norms are counter-productive, for e.g. "Don't hurry to greet customers or don't make much contribution in committees". Many other groups develop norms that limit the lower bounds of behaviour. These tend to reflect motivation, commitment and high performance, for example, "Don't come to committee meetings unprepared, produce as much as you can, work towards customer satisfaction".

It is important to realize that norms of one group cannot be generalized to another group. Some organizations have formal dress codes while others have casual ones. Even in the absence of formal dress codes, norms develop that suggest that during an interview one must be in a formal saree or a summer/winter suit. Even within the same departments in an organization, similar groups develop different norms. One may strive to produce above its assigned quota, while the other may keep its productivity absolutely according to the quota. Norm of one group may be friendly to its supervisor while the other group may remain distant and aloof.

Norm variation occurs when certain individuals violate the norms of the group, but the group takes it into stride. An informal leader arriving few minutes late for a meeting is an example. As long as the leader is not very late, the group will probably do nothing about it.

Norms have the power to force a certain degree of *conformity* among group members. The power of norm conformity was first demonstrated by Asch in an experiment in which groups of people were asked to indicate which of the three lines was of the same length as another line. Actually all the group members except one, were Asch's confederates, and pretended to be subjects. When all the confederates agreed on an answer that was incorrect, the real subject conformed to what the group was saying more than one third of the time, even when he or she had already decided to give the correct answer. The results of the study suggest that there are group norms that press individuals towards conformity. People desire to be one of the group and avoid being visibly different.

When a person does not conform, several things happen. At first the group may increase its communication with the deviant individual and try to bring him or her back to the line. If this does not work, then communication will decline. Over time, the group may begin to exclude the person and in effect may ostracize him or her.

(iii)   *Status*:- Status is prestige, grading, position or rank within the group. It may be formally imposed through titles or amenities. The status of being a Gold Medallist in one's class is attractive to the top performing students of that class. Organizations on the other hand are filled with amenities and perks that are not easily or informally available to everyone and hence carry a status value.

Status symbols have been formed to provide several functions in an organization. They serve as rewards, incentives and communication facilitators. It is important for group members to believe that

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the status hierarchy is equitable. When inequity is perceived, it creates disequilibrium. In spite of the fact that groups generally agree within themselves on status criteria and hence tend to rank individuals fairly closely, individuals can find themselves in conflicting situation when they move between groups where status criteria are different or where groups are formed of individuals with heterogenous backgrounds, business executives may use incomes, perks or size of the companies they run as determinants, academicians may use the number of grants received or papers published. Where groups are made up of many different kinds of individuals or where heterogenous groups are forced to be interdependent, there is potential for status differences to initiate conflict as the group attempts to reconcile and align the differing hierarchies.

c.   *Group Cohesiveness*: For a manager, his group and/team is very important, team or group influences the productivity/ performance of the department which the manager heads. If there is a lot of internal disagreement and a lack of cooperative spirit, then the group will be ineffective in completing the task at hand. In other words, the cohesiveness of such a group is weak. Thus, it becomes paramount for a manager to understand and know what are the factors which increase/ decrease cohesiveness, so that he/she is able to employ them intuitively in his/her group.

Cohesiveness is the extent to which members are attracted to each other as individuals and to the group as a whole. Factors that increase and decrease group cohesiveness are important and are summarized in Table 1.1.

Consequences of group cohesiveness in general imply that groups that are more cohesive tend to interact more frequently, conform more to group norms and become more satisfied with the group.

Cohesiveness influences productivity and performance and vice versa. Group camaraderie helps reduce tension and provides a supportive

Table 1.1	
Factors That Influence Group Cohesiveness	
Factors That Facilitate Group Cohesiveness	Factors That Hinder Group Cohesiveness
Intergroup Competition Personal attraction Favourable evaluation Agreement on goals Interaction	Group size Disagreement on goals Intergroup competition Domination Unpleasant experiences.

climate for successful task/group goal attainment. Successful performance, on the other hand, leads to increased inter member attractiveness and sharing.

More important has been the recognition that the relationship of cohesiveness and productivity depends on the alignment for the groups with those of the organization of which it is a part, (Seashore 1954). The more cohesive a group, the more its member will follow its goals. If the attitudes are favourable (i.e., high output, quality work, cooperation with individual outside the group), a cohesive group will be more productive than a less cohesive group. But if cohesiveness is high and attitudes unfavourable, there will be decreases in productivity. If cohesiveness is low and there is support of goals, productivity increases but less than in the high cohesiveness - high support situation.   Where cohesiveness is low and attitudes are not in support of organization's goal, there seems to be no significant effect of cohesiveness upon productivity. Figure 1-1 gives the summarized conclusions.

Figure 1.1   **Cohesiveness**

		High	Low
Alignment of Goals	High	Strong Increase in Productivity	Moderate Increase in Productivity
	Low	Decrease in Productivity	No significant effect on Productivity

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d.   **Analysis of Group Interactions:** There are two techniques, that help managers in identifying the existence of groups, their leaders, conflicts, and the degree to which members are attracted to each other. These techniques are :

(i)   Sociometry
(ii)   Interaction Analysis

(i)   *Sociometry*: Sociometry is a technique for studying inter personal relations among group members, expressed as attraction, repulsion or indifference. Members of a group indicate their choice or rejection for another member of their group in terms of a given criterion. This criterion refers to any kind of activity which the group members would or would not like to engage with another member. For example, each student of a class may be asked to name one or more of his/her classmates with whom he/she would or would not like to work together on some group project or go on an excursion or share a dorm. He/she is assured that his/her choice or rejection would not be divulged to other members. The patterns of choice or rejection may involve:-

1) Mutual choices or mutual rejections
2) One way choice or rejection
3) No choice or rejection

When several mutual choices are noticed, members involved are said to form a clique. The person who receives the largest number of choices is called a star. One who neither receives nor makes any choice is labelled as an isolate. One who is only rejected and receives no choice is called as rejectee.

Sociometry can also be used for determining job assignments, as to improve performance. In one study, on a chicago construction project, some carpenters and brick layers were allowed to self- select work partner teams, while others were assigned to teams randomly. (R. Vanzelst, 1952). It was found that job satisfaction was significantly higher among the teams that were well chosen; and they also had significantly lower turnover, labour costs and material costs. The self-selecting teams even had a small but positive advantage over the randomly chosen teams in terms of productivity.

Sociometry, should be viewed as a method of measuring a dynamic, ever-changing preference pattern. Preferences change as group members change and can fluctuate over a range of goals.

(ii)   *Interaction Analysis*: Another approach, is the Interaction Analysis technique, proposed by R.F. Bales (1950). This technique require one to observe individual interactions and tabulate the number of discussions taking place between individuals, noting who initiates these discussions and who addresses discussion to the entire group interaction could be placed into one of twelve categories. The first six embrace socio emotional factors like showing disagreement or agreement, tension or tension release, solidarity or antagonism. The second six are task-oriented like giving or asking for suggestions, opinions, information. Utilizing this interaction analysis, Bales found that there is a significant difference in the role played by the two people who do the most talking within the group. One is the idea-person, who takes on the role of the group's task specialist. The other role is the human-relation specialist - the best liked member of the group, who makes friendly, encouraging, and supportive comments.

While the two roles can be played by one person, Bales concluded that groups function more effectively, when these roles are played by two separate members. This allows one to emphasize getting the job done, while the other emphasizes the social aspects of the group, keeping it smoothly functioning. The task specialist concentrates on the group's performance and the human- relations specialist keeps satisfaction high.

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The effective application of group analysis is quite difficult. Sociometry particularly, because of the cumbersomeness of asking people whom they like or dislike, and then ensuring that this data is kept current. In Interaction analysis, observation and category demarcation is also difficult though direct observation is less obstructive than interviewing. Additionally, video tape equipment now makes interaction analysis a more viable alternative for observing and analyzing group behaviour.

e.   **Understanding Group Behaviour:** To understand a group, we must understand two key issues in a group. These are:

    (i)   Independence, Dependence and Interdependence
    (ii)   Process and Content

(i)   *Independence, Dependence and Interdependence*: *Independence* means relying on one's own feelings, impressions and judgements and abilities as guide to action while *dependence* suggests relying on others. *Interdependence*, on the other hand develops as a collection of individuals work out new procedures, standards and values appropriate to the goals and membership resources of the group.

Many experimenters have scientifically proven how people in ambiguous situations depend on others for support. Many studies show how the independence-dependence-interdependence variables are related to other manifestations of group life. Lewis et. al. (1939), found that experimental "democratic" groups of children are more independent and more interdependent than "autocratic" groups.

In addition to a division of labour within the group, interdependence means learning to accept dependence when needed, as in work crew or in a sports team. Groups achieve interdependence through resolution of group differences, so that cooperation and collaboration are optimal while independence of judgement and action are maximized.

(ii) *Process and Content*: The second major issue pertains to what happens when a group gets together, it normally concentrates on the task. This is called the "content", or the subject matter facing the group. However, some issues soon arise, often emotive in nature, which facilitate or hinder the very working of the group and its task output. These may relate to certain interpersonal relations, problems in communication or even some one simply trying to take charge. These indirect issues are called "process" issues which also require recognition and attention, if the group has to function effectively. Since many of the processes are subtle and difficult to identify, it requires training and experience to deal with such processes. Thus, it is essential that a manager must learn to distinguish the two types of issues, the "process" and "content" that face every group. Every aspect of group life involves processes such as conflict, cooperation or alienation. A simple system of process identification was developed by Bion (1948). He refers to the "fight" and "flight" as basic genotypic emotional patterns of group life. He postulates that sometimes "fight" occurs instead of group work because of certain differences in emotional needs. "Flight" on the other hand is the many different ways in which a group moves away or avoids the task for which it was organized. Bion's modalities of fight, flight, are processes through which every group struggles. Bennis and Shephard (1956) expanded on the work of Bion to develop a theory of group progress.

For Bennis and Shephard, the central problems in a group are dependence and inter-dependence. The intrapersonal-interpersonal processes are power, with special reference to authority relations. The work of the group consists of dealing with differences and conflicts and in learning to become more aware of the subtle and open forms of communication.

f.   **Advantages and Disadvantages of Groups:** Groups in organizations can lead to both advantages and disadvantages. Let us look at the disadvantages first.

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Disadvantages of Groups: 1. A major disadvantage of a group is that it is highly time consuming and is expensive. A common advantage is that "Committees keep minutes and waste hours". This kind of saying is often the real problem in working with group, and some employees may deliberately use it to waste time or defer action. In a research study Berg (1967) discovered from the 124 groups he studied, that groups pursued their topic of discussions for a mere 58 seconds on an average, before they explored a different topic. This explains the common perception that people consider meetings to be the greatest time wasters.

2.   Another disadvantage might be the 'risky" shift phenomenon which is often present in groups. Research shows that groups tend to choose riskier solutions than individuals when facing uncertainty involving problems. Groups may do so because the responsibility of the decision is diffused among the group members, specially in a group where there is no leader.

3.   The third pitfall of groups decision making is a phenomenon called *"group think"*, in which all the members tend to think alike, it is true of a group where there is a high level of esprit de corps. The harmony of the group becomes more important than the objective and critical thinking. Group think operates more so in groups where outside information and influence is not present. Thus group members may launch into an activity not because each member wanted it, but because each one thought that the others wanted it and wanted to be nice to them.

Advantages of a Group: Although the time and cost factor is a disadvantage, yet increased knowledge about a problem, greater commitment for the decision and increased coordination may be some of the benefits of the groups. The advantages elaborated below outweigh the disadvantages of the group, though the manager must be aware of the pitfalls involved in group decision making.

1.   First, the group process brings together the knowledge and expertise of many individuals. In a complex organizational setting, the sharing of information and knowledge becomes of paramount importance for a problem solution. No one individual could have designed, manufactured, financed, marketed and serviced a complex product like a motor car. This required the expertise of many individuals, and thus many organizations got formed to overcome the limitation of an individual working alone.

2.   Second, an increase in creativity can be the end result in a group decision making, and this kind of a situation is different from the one where expertise is shared. The group can have a synergistic effect, even when the level of knowledge is at the same level among group members. Synergy refers to the combined healthy output of every unit of a system. Duplication of the statement is that sometimes 2 + 2 can be equal not only to 4 but to 8 or 10 units of output, depending on the compatibility and creativity level in a group. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts? where group members build upon each other's ideas.

3.   Third advantage of a group working is that it facilitates acceptance of decisions/policies of the group. In a study, Coch and French (1948) found that workers who participated in discussions of implementation of technological changes in their jobs showed significantly less resistance than workers who were not involved in such a participation. More recently, Romanoff (1989) states that if employees are involved in the design stage of an appraisal program, there is greater acceptance and commitment to the appraisal process.

4.   A corollary of the above advantage is the fourth one, which is that better understanding of the decision results in easier implementation when more persons are involved in taking that decision. When one person takes a decision, chances of not following it due to misunderstanding its intent are relatively high.

Summary and Conclusion

Groups provide synergy to organizations. Group Dynamics is used to describe the groups operations. It encompasses the dynamics of interaction pattern. Conflicts, power, collaboration and consensus enter and leave these interaction patterns. How leadership structure changes or how group problem solving, decision making, group effectiveness and productivity changes and what subtle and direct implications it has in the group and the organizations are studied under group dynamics. Understanding these group dynamics will enable managers to competently harness the synergy of the group members. Though groups are described as a collection of individuals but managing groups in organizations is different from, and more difficult than, managing individuals. This is due to the fact that groups exhibit patterns of behaviour that are different from the behaviours of members in their individual capacity. Despite, its complexity, however, managers have to deal effectively with groups because of the synergy they provide. By understanding groups and the dynamics of group behaviour, the manager will be able to utilize groups to the mutual advantage of the group members and the organization.It is important to consider the objectives being pursued by a group of people because, unless an individual's targets are compatible with others, conflict is likely to be generated and performance of the group will suffer. The role of the manager is to bring together people to identify common objectives and to assess the best means of achieving them. There will sometimes be differences in people on both ends and means. The manager's task is to practice the skills of interpersonal relationships, so as to allow the group to express their views, yet enable them to find common ground upon which to act. And this is the prime reason for a manager to study the group phenomenon.

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