**GROUP DISCUSSION**

**What is GD?**

* GD may refer to a communicative situation that allows its participants to express views and opinions to other participants.
* It is a group process.
* It is systematic.
* It is purposeful and goal oriented.
* GD is different from debate…. in *nature, approach and procedure*.

**Difference between GD and Group Debate**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **GD** | **Group Debate** |
| Cooperative in nature | competitive |
| *Unlimited* perspectives | *Limited-for and against* |
| For problem solving, decision making, personal assessment | assessment of decision, solutions adopted |

**GROUP DISCUSSION STRATEGIES**

* Getting the GD started – Normally no elected or formal leader in GD. Anyone can take initiative and show leadership skills. Opening [lines](extra%20material/GD%20opening%20statements.docx) should be *assertive*.
* Contributing systematically - The success of a GD depends on systematic contribution by each member of the group. The contributions must reflect the depth understanding and knowledge of the subject as well as participant’s ability to analyze it. Each participant must see the topic from his/her perspective so that his/her background give it a new [interpretation](extra%20material/contributing%20systematically%20in%20gd.docx)
* Creating a Friendly Cooperative Atmosphere- Creative an atmosphere conducive to positive discussion is the responsibility of each member of the group. Although a GD is a *serious and formal occasion*, there is no need to make it too serious and boring. It is desirable to make it an [enjoyable experience](extra%20material/creating%20a%20friendly%20atmosphere%20in%20gd.docx) for all.
* Promoting Participation - No one should *monopolize* the discussion. No one should do all the talking because the **purpose of GD** is to exchange views and not to listen to just one person. No one should stray from the topic. Talkative members should be controlled. *Reticent* members should be encouraged.
* Handling Conflict - Do not get entangled into web of words and land into argument. Maintain a friendly attitude. Avoid conflicts *between persons and NOT between the ideas*. Clarify conflicting statements given by group members so that they do not lead to personal differences.
* Effective Closure - In the absence of a designated leader, the group is likely to continue until the examiner announces that the time is over. If conclusion is not unanimous then it should be at least positive. Don’t suggest/speak once the closure has been announced.

**KINDS OF GROUP DISCUSSION**

* **Organizational GD**
* **GD as a part of selection process**

**ORGANISATIONAL GD**

* In organization, GDs are mainly used for group decision making.
* Members of the interacting group take the responsibility of explaining their ideas.
* Following techniques are used for organizational GD:

**Brainstorming**

* It is a method for generating a variety of ideas and perspectives.
* It is as **uncritical** as possible because criticism inhibits the free flow of ideas.
* The more diverse the group, the more likely it is to generate unexpected insights and ideas.

**Nominal Group Technique**

* This technique restricts discussion during the decision making process and hence it is termed ‘nominal group’.
* Only representatives of all the groups called for discussion and decision making.
* The *final decision* is determined by the idea with the highest aggregate ranking.

**Delphi Technique**

* It is a more complex and time-consuming alternative in group decision making.
* The *problem is identified* and the members are asked to provide the *potential solutions through questionnaires*.
* The results are compiled at a central location and reproduced.

**GROUP DISCUSSION AS PART OF A SELECTION PROCESS**

This process is used as a tool for judging the personality of candidates, their communication skills, knowledge, leadership, and their ability to work as a team.

The four major components generally evaluated in GD are:

1. **Knowledge**
2. **Communication skills**
3. **Team spirit**
4. **Leadership skills**

**Types of Group Discussion Topic**

Group Discussion topic can be general or specific. Example: Kashmir Conflict or just a phrase saying "Where there's a will there's a way".

There are different types of GD’s:

1)   Topic based

2)   Case Study based

**Topic-Based Group Discussions** are further divided into:

1)    Knowledge Based Topics

2)    Abstract Topics

3)    Controversial Topics

4)    Opinion Seeking Topics

**TOPIC BASED STUDY:**

**1)   Knowledge Based Topics:**

* It requires in depth information about the topic
* You should be able to support it with facts and figures  
  Your information should be substantial.

**Examples**:

a)   Cold War

c)    Is terrorism the price we have to pay for democracy?

d)   Globalization and Privatization

e)   Privatization of Universities/colleges/schools

g)   Does India need a dictator?

h)    MBA in India is overrated

**2)   Abstract Topics:**

* A topic which is absolutely out of the box.
* To test your *creativity* and also to some extent your *thinking ability*.
* Such topics can be interpreted in different ways by the candidates.
* Through such topics, your comprehension skills and communication skills are judged.

**Example**:

1)   A Teardrop on my Guitar

2)   Where there’s a will there’s away

3)   26 Alphabets

4)   Infinite Numbers

5)   A Walk to Remember

6)  Black and white

Such topics do not require facts or figures but simply judge your imagination and how well you can associate it with you day to day life.

**3)   Controversial Topics**

* Such topics can lead to an argument, they’re argumentative in nature.
* Meant to generate controversy and judge the analytical skills
* See if he/ she can think rationally, without any bias and arrive at a harmonious conclusion.
* To judge the **maturity** level of the students

**Example:**

1)   Reservation should be removed

2)   Quota System should be abolished

3)   Maintaining brotherhood is a social obligation

4)   Beauty Pageants give a wrong impact on the women of India

5)   Politics in India

6)   Reality shows- Should children be banned from coming in such shows?

**4)   Opinion Seeking Topics:**

* candidates are asked to put across their opinions, their point of views
* look for presentation skills also your ability to work in a team

**Example**:

1)   Women – boon to the society or bane to the society

2)   Love Marriage or Arranged Marriage

3)   Nuclear Family or Joint Family

**CASE BASED STUDY:**

Under a case based study, a situation or a scenario is left to students for an open discussion. These are open end discussions, wherein nobody is right or wrong, using their thinking ability they decide what they can do in such situations etc.

The panelist under the case based study, look for the decision making skills, his/her ability to work in a team etc.

**Tips for Success in a GD**

* Be thorough with current issues.
* Always enter the room with a *piece of paper and a pen*.
* Listen to the topic carefully.
* Jot down as many ideas as possible in the first few minutes.
* Try to dissect the topic and explore the underlying causes or consequences.
* Organize the ideas before speaking.
* Speaking first is a high-risk, high-return strategy. Hence, speak first only if there is something sensible and substantial to say.
* Try to **contribute meaningfully and significantly** every time you speak. Do not speak just for the sake of saying something.
* Identify supporters and opponents and allow the supporters to augment your ideas.
* Keep track of time and *share time fairly*.
* Maintain *eye contact* while speaking and listening.
* Do not indulge in parallel conversations.
* Use tact and wit. If you must use humor, do so judiciously so as not to hurt others or deviate from the topic.
* Display a spirit of cooperation.
* If things get chaotic, take the initiative to restore order by providing a fresh direction to the discussion.

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