

A group consists of a number of individuals working together for a common objective. Groups have significant influence on an organization and are inseparable from an organization. They are useful for the organization as they form foundation of human resources.

The study of group behavior is essential for an organization to achieve its goals. Individual and group behavior varies from each other. In 1920, Elton Mayo and his associates conducted the Hawthorne experiments and came to know that the group behavior has great impact on productivity. The importance of group behavior has been realized from time to time.

Human behavior consists of individuals, who move in groups. The knowledge of group behavior as well as individual behavior is necessary for a manager. He must understand group psychology and should also understand individual behavior in the context of group behavior. The group in which he moves influences individual work, job satisfaction and effective performance.

### Definition of a group

A group is a two or more individual who interact regularly with each other to accomplish a common purpose or goal.

According to Marvin Shaw, "a group comprises, of two or more persons who interact with one another in such a manner that each person influences and is influenced by each other person'.

The key parts of this definition are the concepts of interaction and influence, which also limit the size of the group. It is difficult for members to interact sufficiently in a large group.

Groups or work teams are the primary tools used by managers. Managers need groups to co-ordinate individual behavior in order to reach the organizational goals. Groups can make a manager's job easier because by forming a group, he need not explain the task to each and every individual. A manager can easily coordinate with the work of an individual by giving the group a task and allow them to co-ordinate with each other. But for a group to work effectively, the interactions between its members should be productive. Therefore, managers must pay attention to the needs of individuals.

### Need and importance for a Group

The reasons for the need, of groups are as follows:

- Management of modern organizations makes mutual efforts to introduce industrial democracy at workplace. They use project teams and work committees where workers get due recognition. They willingly participate in decision-making.
- The tasks in modern industries are becoming more complex, tedious and of repetitive nature. Work committees, work groups and teams are formed to monitor the work. They also make the environment at workplace livelier.
- Groups help in making participative management more effective.
- Groups of all kinds and types help by cooperating in all the matters related to production and human relations to work effectively in the organization.

- An individual cannot perform each and every task. Group efforts are required for its completion. For example, building a ship, making of a movie, construction of a fly-over, etc. All these require coordinated and unified efforts of many individuals, working in a group.
- A group can judge in a better way as compared to an individual.



## Classification of groups

### Groups can be either Formal or Informal.

1. **Formal Groups:** A designated work group defined by the organization's structure. A formal group is set up by the organization to carry out work in support of the organization's goals. In formal groups, the behaviours that one should engage in are stipulated by - and directed toward - organizational goals. Examples include a book-keeping department, an executive committee, and a product development team. Formal groups may be command groups or task groups.

i) **Command Group:** A command group consists of a manager and the employees who report to him or her. Thus, it is defined in terms of the organization's hierarchy. Membership in the group arises from each employee's position on the organizational chart.

ii) **Task Group:** A task group is made up of employees who work together to complete a particular task or project. A task group's boundaries are not limited to its immediate hierarchical superior. It can cross command relationships. An employee's membership in the group arises from the responsibilities delegated to the employee -that is, the employee's responsibility to carry out particular activities. Task group may be temporary with an established life span, or they may be open ended.

iii) **Committee:** A group of people officially delegated to perform a function, such as investigating, considering, reporting, or acting on a matter. Committee, one or more persons appointed or elected to consider report on, or take action on a particular matter. It investigates analyses and debates the problem and makes recommendation. Committee usually has their own committee member comprising of advisory authority, secretary and others. Recommendation is sent to the authority that is responsible for implementing them.

### Characteristics of Formal groups

- Explicitly stated defined structure, procedural rules and membership
- Created to carry out some specific task or to meet a required goal
- Relatively permanent or temporary (e.g. steering group or problem solving group)
- Defined roles and designated work assignments
- Well Defined norms
- Specified goals and deadlines

2. **Informal Groups:** An organization's informal groups are the groups that evolve to meet social or affiliation needs by bringing people together based on shared interests or friendship. Thus, informal groups are alliances that are neither formally structured nor organizationally determined. These groups are natural formations in the work environment that appear in response to the need for social contact. Many factors explain why people are attracted to one another. One explanation is simply proximity; when people work near one another every day, they are likely to form friendships. That likelihood is even greater when people also share similar attitudes, personalities, or economic status.

i) **Friendship Groups:** Groups often develop because the individual members have one or more common characteristics. We call these formations 'friendship groups'. Social alliances, which frequently extend outside the work situation, can be based on similar age, same political view, attended the same college, etc.

ii) **Interest Groups:** People who may or may not be aligned into common command or task groups may affiliate to attain a specific objective with which each is concerned. This is an interest group.

iii) **Reference Groups:** Sometimes, people use a group as a basis for comparison in making decisions or forming opinions. When a group is used in this way, it is a reference group. Employees have reference groups inside or outside the organization where they work. For most people, the family is the most important reference groups. Other important reference groups typically include co-workers, friends, and members of the person's religious organization. The employee need not admire a group for it to serve as a reference group. Some reference groups serve as a negative reference; the employee tries to be unlike members of these groups.

iv) **Membership Groups:** When a person does belong to a group (formal and informal groups to which employees actually belong) the group is called a membership group (or affiliation group) for that person. Members of a group have some collection of benefits and responsibilities that go beyond the group serving as a reference point. In a membership group, each member would be expected to contribute to the group's well being and would enjoy the benefits arising from the group members' friendship.

v) **Cliques:** A relatively permanent informal groups that involves friendship. Most of the relationships came down to two cliques, each with a hanger-on, and some isolates. The groups included several different professions. They developed ideas about each other. Clique membership acted as a form of social control, forcing people to conform to group desires. The groups established norms regarding output, treatment of supervisor, reciprocity and other interpersonal relations. The cliques served as a system for sense making about organizational events. They developed their own set of beliefs, explaining things to each other.



## Group Decision Making

Because the performance of a group involves taking into account the needs and opinions of every group member, being able to come to an equitable decision as efficiently as possible is important for the functioning of the group. There are a variety of ways to make decisions as a group; the seven-step decision-making model presented below offers an effective structure for choosing an appropriate course of action for a particular task or project. It can also be an effective method for dealing with a problem or interpersonal conflict that arises within the group.

1. **Identify the decision to be made.** Before beginning to gather information and list alternatives, it is important for you as a group to understand clearly what you are trying to decide so you have a goal on which to focus your discussions. Potential questions to ask are: What are the particulars of the assigned task? What are we being asked to do? What conflict is affecting our group effectiveness? What barrier to effective group work are we facing?
2. **Analyze the issue under discussion.** Once you have defined your goal (i.e., the decision to be made or the problem to be overcome), examine the data and resources that you already have, and identify what additional information you may need. Ask yourselves: What is causing the problem? For whom is this a problem? What is wrong with the

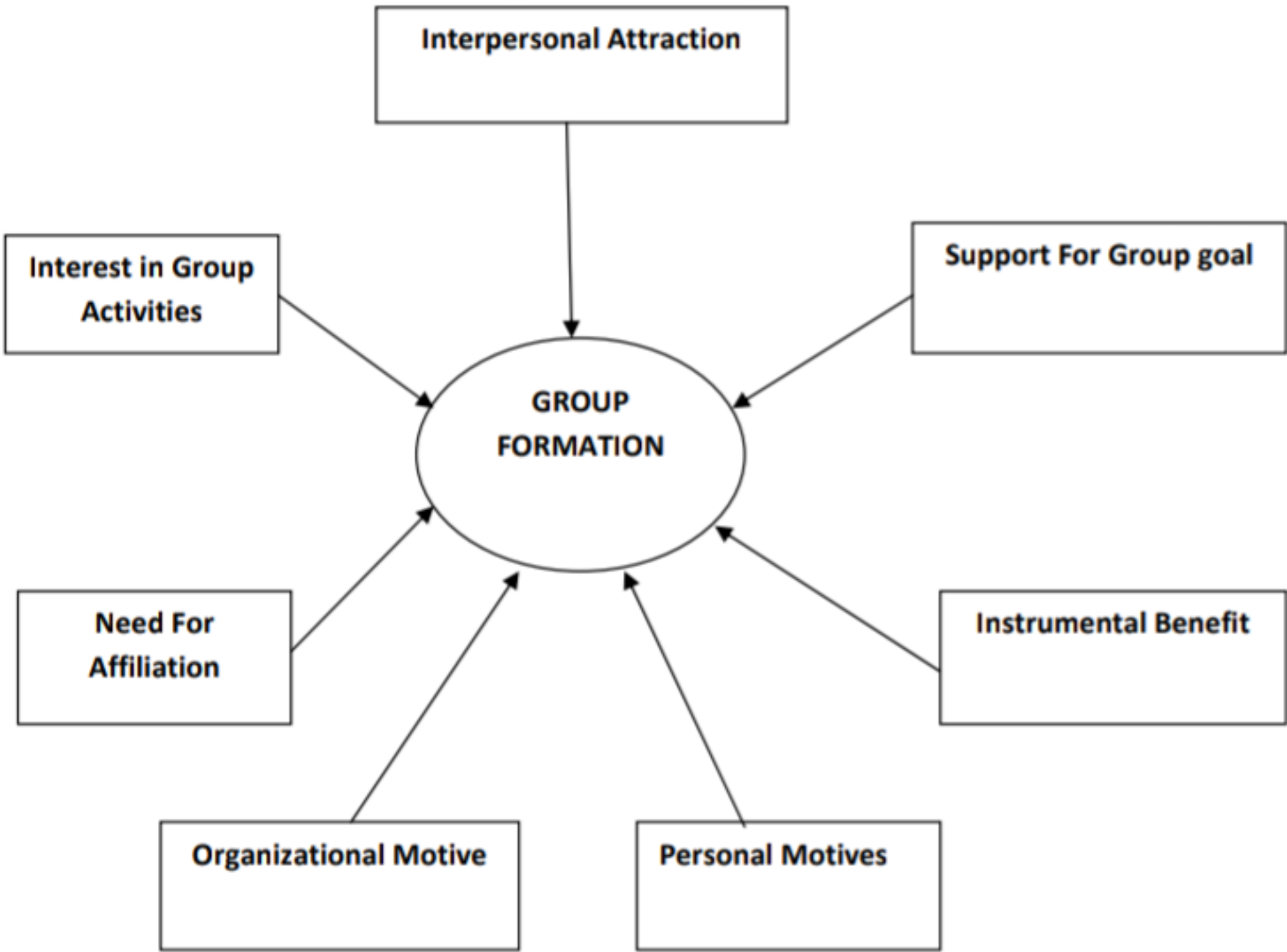
current situation? Why do we need to deal with this issue/decision? Where else can we find resources?

3. **Establish criteria.** Identify the criteria or conditions that would determine whether a chosen solution is successful. Ideally, a solution will be feasible, move the group forward, and meet the needs of every group member. You may want to rank the criteria in order of importance (for example., circumstances may be such that some issues may not be fully resolved). Consider these questions: What would make a solution/decision successful? What issues need to be dealt with in the solution? What criteria will help us determine whether everyone is happy with the solution/decision? Are some criteria more necessary than others?
4. **Brainstorm potential solutions.** Using the resources and information collected above, brainstorm for potential solutions to the problem or decision identified in step 1. This involves collecting as many ideas as possible. At this stage, ideas should not be criticized or evaluated. Some questions to ask include: What are some possible solutions that would meet most of our established criteria? Are there any options that we may have overlooked? What could we do in the absence of constraints?
5. **Evaluate options and select the best one.** Once you have a list of potential solutions, you are now ready to evaluate them for the best alternative according to the criteria identified in step 3. Remember that you may be able to combine ideas to create a solution. Ideally, everyone would agree with solution (a consensus), but it's possible that not everyone will. In this case, you will need to use a different decision making methods . Additional questions to ask when evaluating alternatives are: What are the pros/cons for each option? Which option is the most realistic to accomplish for now? Which option is the most likely to solve the problem for the long-term?
6. **Implement the solution.** This involves identifying the resources necessary to implement the decision, as well as the potential obstacles, then taking action. Decide: What should be done? How? By whom? By when? In what order?
7. **Monitor and evaluate the outcome.** Based on the criteria identified in step 3, evaluate whether the decision was successful. If not, revisit step 4 to evaluate the other options or generate new ones.



Group formation and development

Groups can form when individuals with similar goals and motives come, together. Groups are formed voluntarily. The individuals of a group can join and leave the group any time and they can also change their tasks. Hence, understanding how groups form and develop is important for managers. There are certain motives because of which, the individuals join a group, which are as follows:



- **Organizational motives to join groups:** Organizations form functional and task groups because such groups help the organization in structuring and grouping the organizational activities logically and efficiently.
- **Personal motives to join groups:** Individuals also choose to join informal or interest groups for unimportant reasons. Since joining these groups is voluntary, various personal motives affect membership.
- **Interpersonal attraction:** Individuals conic together to form informal or interest group, as they arc also attracted to each other. The factors that contribute to interpersonal attraction are sex, similar attitudes, personality and economic standing. The closeness of group members may also be an important factor.
- **Interest in-group activities:** Individuals may also be motivated to join an informal or interest group because the activities of the group appeal to them. Playing tennis, discussing current events or contemporary literature, all these are group activities that individuals enjoy.
- **Support for group goals:** The individuals may also be motivated goals by the other group members to join. For example, a club, which is dedicated to environmental conservation, may motivate individuals to join. Individuals join groups, such as these in order to donate their money and time to attain the goals they believe in and to meet other individuals with similar values.
- **Need for affiliation:** Another reason for individuals to join groups is to satisfy their need for attachment. Retired/old aged individuals join groups to enjoy the companionship of other individuals in similar situation.
- **Instrumental benefits:** Group membership sometimes also helpful in providing other benefits to an individual. For example, a manager might join a Rotary/ Lions club if he feels that being a member of this club will lead to important and useful business contacts.