

Group Discussion

As a selection tool

What will we learn....

- Definition of GD
- GD Vs. Debate
- GD evaluation parameters in selection
- GD strategies

Definition

- An interactive oral process
 - Members listen to each other
 - They talk to each other
- It is group process
 - Person-to-person interaction
 - Person-to group interaction
- It is systematic – it is not random
 - Proper sitting
 - It is structured - time to think, discuss, conclude
- Use for varied reasons
 - Selection, taking democratic and imp decisions at work

GD and Debate

- There is a difference
- Debate for a particular pt.
- GD positive exchange of views
- Debate competitive in nature – GD cooperative group process
- Debate – support to one point of view – conclusion drawn to support that point
- GD – can support differing views – conclusion drawn as per group's common view

GD time and number

- 6- 15 members – sit circular, semi circular or u-shaped sitting
- Evaluator- sits away to judge a GD
- Time: 15 – 45 minutes – depending on the topic

GD – evaluation parameters for selection

- Subject knowledge
- Communication skills
 - Verbal
 - Non-verbal
- Leadership skills
- Team management/group behaviour/team spirit

Subject knowledge

- *Wide range of subjects* – good understanding – **use** of data, stories/case studies/examples - **no** beating around the bush – **bring out** more points to support argument
- *GD can be:*
 - Topic based
 - Case study based

e.g.

Friends, I think it is wrong to assume that terrorism and unrest in J& K is the problem of the last one decade alone. If you take a look at the statistics from 1985 to 2001, you can easily observe that even during those years, tens and thousands of innocent people were killed between 1985 and 2001. In fact Pakistan once claimed that over 75,000 Kashmiris had been killed between this period. India holds that the total number of casualties were 30,000.

Topic based

- **Current** - economics, politics, culture, environment etc – reading magazines, newspaper would help
 - *Given to judge* - analytical and critical thinking skills
- **Argumentative** – controversial topics – on caste, religion etc – to generate conflict
 - *Given to judge* – emotional intelligence, conflict resolution abilities of candidates, openness to different issues, ability to convince or influence group behaviour
- **Abstract** – topics where candidates can apply common sense/creativity/out-of-the-box thinking – e.g. *red, deeper shades of black, do you need rules, the alphabet 'A'.*

CASE STUDY BASED

- A case – problem situation
- GD to find possible solutions
- Given to judge:
 - Problem solving skills
 - Analytical skills
 - Logical thinking

Communication skills

- Effective speaking and listening skills
- **Listening skills –**
 - If not listening - repeating someone's points, no continuity in points
 - Good listener – *advantages* – can contribute to discussion not break the continuity – can pick up points to discuss
- **Appropriateness of language** – right words, phrases, grammar – Clarity required
 - Don't – use big words, long sentences, jargons, slang – *projects you as a show-off* – can be a negative
 - E.g. "I don't think that accountants have the CIA to take a decision in a jiffy"

- **Clarity of expression –**
- Clear thinking – confused person will confuse others
- **Clarity**
 - Correct tone – everyone can understand emotions through voice – variation/modulation – no monotony
 - Correct voice – volume - everyone can hear
 - Fluency
 - Clarity in speech – proper articulation
 - Not to speak too fast or too slow
- **Positive speech attitudes**
 - Good communicator or careless speaker
 - Mature/dignified or immature
 - Positive or antagonistic
 - Relaxed or tense speaker

Non-verbal attributes

- Body language is also scored
- Don'ts
- Pointing fingers – sign of aggression
- Playing with pen/paper/hair – lack of interest/ nervousness
- Stooping or slouching
- Sitting with crossed arms or legs
- Throwing your hands
- Fidget
- Not too stiff
- Moving/shaking your legs
- No scowling or showing signs of irritation/aggression/disagreement with facial expression
- Playing or destroying the chair
- Dos
- Maintain eye contact with group members - don't look at judge/evaluator
- Figure Four posture

3. Leadership skills

- Initiative
- Analysis
- Assertiveness
- Self-confidence
- Objectivity
- Patience and composure
- Persuasiveness
- Motivation

3.1. Initiative

- You will get points if you:
- Initiate the discussion
- Create an atmosphere where people are free to talk/participate
- Promote positive group interaction
- Clarify points when needed
- Keep the discussion on the right track
- Lead the discussion to positive conclusion

3.2. Analysis

- Ability to analyze a problem
- Think of a solution
- Ability to analyze a topic and present logical reasons
- Ability to listen to other's points, analyze and present related points

3.3. Assertiveness

- Assertive and bold – not aggressive/offensive/ rigid
- Not meek and submissive
- Assertiveness can deal with
- Chaos in a group
- Resolve conflicts in a group
- Allow all to participate
- Lead the discussion on the right track
- Control sabotaging members

3.4. Self-confidence

- Talk with self-confidence and conviction
- Tackle problem situations with ease – not hassled
- Avoid – over confidence – boastful - *pansophist*

3.5. Objectivity

- Being impartial and rational – no bias
- View a situation without any bias – no emotions
- In a conflicting situation – no emotions - thus correct decision
- All ideas and suggestions backed by practical solutions, facts and figures.

3.6. Patience and composure

- Never loose cool
- Not get provoked
- Lots of patience to handle and explain a situation

- **Participant 1-** *A women has to compromise and give up her job after she has a child. Men cant be expected to do so and sit at home*
- **Participant 2:** *You are such a chauvinist!! You think children are only the responsibilities of the mother and not the father? Tell me, what is wrong if men sit at home and look after children?*
- **Participant 3:** *I think like men, women also look for freedom, recognition, equality at workplace. They make an important contribution at a workplace. There are many cases now where men are willing to be house-husbands where women earn*

3.7. Persuasiveness

- Ability to persuade others to accept ones view point
- Need knowledge, facts, data, logical argument and lots of practice

3.8. Motivation

- A good leader is motivated and can motivate
- Evaluator looking for this
- Active and positive participation in GD
- To motive others to participate –
 - by encouraging the shy ones,
 - clarify the topic,
 - provide points to discuss

4. Team management

- Assessment would be
 - Each member a team player?
 - What are the team management skills they have?
- 1. Adaptability
- 2. Positive attitude
- 3. Cooperation

Group discussion strategies

- Think and take notes
- Write only key points
- If concept/term – get a clarity first – *E.g. Social networking sites are bad for youngsters*. Understand what is social networking on internet
- What do you know about topic – cases/stories/data
- What should be your stand/point of view - should begin by taking a stand – e.g. *“I strongly believe that the social networking sites are bad for youngsters”*

- Does it require judgment/solution from the candidate – think and take down the solutions
- If an issue or a problem e.g. Reservation for women is essential...
- Take your stand
- Brief history about reservation
- Why was reservation given – causes
- Effects – supported by facts
- Steps taken further
- Concluding remark to support the stand – *it is essential.....it is not essential*
- Give a solution

- **Getting the GD started**
- Don't begin for the heck of it – only when have points
- E.g. *Good morning friends. We are here to discuss the topic 'Cloning should be banned'. In this regard I feel that cloning as such is not bad. I don't think it needs to be banned'.*
- *Good morning friends. We are here to discuss the topic 'Cloning should be banned'. As we all know that cloning is a technique producing.....in light of this we need to discuss whether cloning holds any future? If yes what are they?*

- **Contribute systematically –**
- identify the stage of discussion – if in problem definition stage then don't jump - Focus on the theme of discussion – avoid digression
- Keep in mind what is already discussed
- *E.g. I don't understand your point. I think we need to stick to the main point*
- *I see what you mean but we should stick to the main point of discussion*
- Contribute at least 4-5 times in a 8-10 minute GD

- Supporting your opinion – with facts and logical reason
 - E.g. We must reduce our energy consumption. First, there's the high price of oil and electricity, Secondly, there's the long term danger of using up the oil stocks
- Effective intervention
 - Interrupt only when a valid reason
 - Use appropriate expressions – *excuse me, may I interrupt, May I add, May I say something*
 - *Excuse me for interrupting you, but it's two months duration and not one.*
- Address each other politely
 - *I think what my friend here is trying to say.....*

- Exchanging opinion
 - Asking for opinion
 - *E.g. what is your opinion about this?*
- Giving opinion – express in strong, neutral or tentative way
 - I have no doubt that....
 - I think that.....
 - It appears to me that.....

- **Effective Closure**
- Individual or group conclusions
- Group –
- Conclude when the group came to agreement
 - Summarize what the group agreed upon – common points of agreement
 - Never bring new points
 - Points of disagreement
- There are some who might want to conclude individually – wait for moderator to tell you