04 *Groups and Teams*

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.0   LEARNING OBJECTIVES :

- The unit will enable the students to understand the relevance of Groups and Teams in the formal world.

- The presence of Primary and Secondary groups in Group and team Communication.

- It will make the students understand the advantages and disadvantages of groups and teams.

4.1   INTRODUCTION :

The chapter will be focusing on the relevance of groups and teams in the professional world. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the presence of groups and teams ? The chapter has incorporated the concept of role and importance of group communication and it has also given idea about the different types of teams that exists at the work place

4.2 GROUPS AND TEAMS : AN IDEA

The main types of Communication occur typically in one of the three ways : verbal, nonverbal and visual. To effectively communicate with a group one has to Use appropriate forms of communication, use time wisely, encourage two–way feedback, define Clarity of roles and responsibilities, build the team spirit, resort to open door policy because when everyone is shut behind closed doors, it creates an atmosphere of secrecy, therefore these are the most imperative things to consider. It is equally important to use appropriately the online tools instead of meetings (if it is not too much necessary)

When communication occurs between two persons, it is called interpersonal communication. On the other hand, when more than two individuals are involved, it is called group communication. Groups such as families, work teams, friendship circles, committees, and teams are some examples.

4.2.1 Defining groups and teams :

The terms 'group' and 'team' are often used interchangeably. Is there really a difference between the two terms and if so what is it ? A starting point in exploring this difference is to say that all teams are groups but not all groups are teams. From this it follows that what is said about groups will apply to teams but that teams will have special characteristics of their own.

Groups may be formal or informal, primary or secondary.

Primary groups have regular and frequent interactions with each other in working towards some common interests or tasks. A small work group and a project team are primary groups. They usually have an important influence on their members' values, attitudes and beliefs.

Such groups can be formal, in that they were deliberately created to serve an organization need, or informal, in that the group forms outside formal structures to meet the specific needs of individuals. Informal teams are a powerful feature of organizational life because they bring together people who have common interests and concerns and who exchange knowledge and information.

Secondary groups are those whose members interact less frequently. These are often larger than primary groups (an example is a large committee). Their members do not have the opportunity to get to know each other well and as a result they are usually less cohesive than primary groups.

In today's organizations, more and more work is carried out by teams and groups of people working together towards a common objective. Making teams and groups work effectively is a challenging task for the manager. Bringing individuals together can slow down and complicate everyday processes and conflict can make even the simplest task difficult to achieve.

Team working has benefits, however. It provides a structure and means of bringing together people with a suitable mix of skills and knowledge. This encourages the exchange of ideas, creativity, motivation and job satisfaction and can extend individual roles and learning. In turn, this can improve productivity, quality and customer focuses. It can also encourage employees to be more flexible and can improve the ability of the organization to respond to fast–changing environments. A team can achieve what none of the individuals within it can do alone; with the right dynamic, a collection of ordinary individuals can achieve extraordinary feats. But the converse can also occur : a team can fail to achieve what any of its members could have easily accomplished by doing it individually.

So let us find the difference between the two by separately studying the both.

4.2.2 Introduction to Group Communication :

As human beings, we tend to be in social circles around the people. We form relationships with one another naturally and are one of the essential elements of our life. They exist in several forms in our lives. When communication occurs between two persons, it is called interpersonal communication.

On the other hand, when more than two individuals are involved, it is called group communication. Groups such as families, work teams, friendship circles, committees, and teams are some examples. Groups may overlap and share common goals and objectives.

An individual may belong to one or many groups.

Groups also define the quality of life of a person in many essential ways. A group may strongly influence an individual. Also, the actions taken by groups define many of the decisions shaping the world. People are influenced by groups such that they experience and understand the world.

4.2.3 Group Communication :

Groups help us interacting with each other and making our self–identities. Group communication is interaction and exchange of information between culturally, geographically or linguistically alike people who are a member of a group.

In an organization, it may be defined as the mode by which the employees and employers, team members communicate with each other. In a market, it can be defined as how a business interacts with its targeted

customers. Members may be identified by their standard set of symbols, a specific language or outer appearance. For example, the server may be used by someone in the information industry as the internet. In contrast, in the food industry, it may refer to somebody responsible for taking orders from the customers.

4.2.4 Importance of Group Communication :

Quality of communication between the members of a group is also an essential factor in making decisions and achieving goals. It has been seen that with the growing number of members in the group, the effectiveness of communication keeps on decreasing. For quality group communication, the group members must possess a sense of belonging and mutual respect to each other along with common goals. The importance of effective group communication increases in the business environment. Many variables play a part here.

Take the example of a seating arrangement : In a circular seating arrangement, members can make eye contact and communicate with everyone else in the group; hence a web network style is followed in communication where everyone can share ideas. It has been observed that this type of arrangement is most effective in idea generation, decision making and problem–solving.

The types of messages a group exchanges, determine the kind of the group. It can be a social group or a task group depending upon the nature of messages being exchanged by them. The quality of messages can also determine the roles played by each member of the group.

Group communication can consist of various types and means such as social media, print media, digital media, speeches, etc. This choice depends on numerous factors like the availability of the communication mode, the target audience, the cost of the communication initiative, etc.

4.2.5 Role of Group Communication in an Organization :

The primary purpose of group communication is to share information. The information can vary from person to person, depending upon his role. For example, the group leader may present the idea, and present relevant information and the other group members may give feedback. A group also communicates to manage conflicts along with making decisions to overcome the difficult circumstances. The exchange of ideas decides the future of the group and the goals which a group can achieve.

For example, the way the family members share problems and discuss them to solve decides the kind of bond they have and the respect they show to each other.

4.2.6 Primary and Secondary groups in Group Communication

There are mainly two types of groups : **Primary and Secondary**. It is dependent upon the degree to which the group meets one's needs.

The primary group meets most of the needs of the individual. The secondary group meets some of the needs of the individual.

Secondary groups generally include professional or workgroups. Here the goal is to accomplish a task. For example, the purpose of a member of a sales department is to sell.

When in a workgroup, a person can accomplish more than what he can accomplish individually. It is because people of different specialized skills, experience, talents or education work together in combinations to overcome new challenges and find ways to create approaches that they would not have created alone by themselves.

But on the other hand, secondary groups may not meet your need for mutual understanding and sharing on personal levels. Family members can understand you better on the personal front than your co–workers.

4.3 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF GROUP COMMUNICATION :

Group Communicationis a most talked about in the recent time; it is not exempted of drawbacks. Let us see some advantages and disadvantages of Group Communication in companies.

4.3.1 Advantages of Group Communication :

Let us have a look at some of the advantages of Group Communication now :

• With the help of Group communication, there occurs some idea generation because of the different viewpoints of different members that create a valuable knowledge pool for the organization

• With the assistance of Group Communication, organizations can come up with more comprehensive solutions, plus, group communication also helps in making decisions that appreciate better acceptance

• When a group interacts with superior authorities about some issues like pay raise, they will get more favorable outcomes compared to an individual interacting with top management for similar issues

4.3.2 Disadvantages of Group Communication :

Along with the advantages of Group Communication, there are some disadvantages as well, so let us explore them :

In the cases when because of the dominance of some superiors or dominant members, other participants do not share their actual and accurate viewpoints, then Group communication cannot be beneficial.

Group communication can also create productivity issues for a company when the group members involve in some other sorts of personal discussions that may deviate the focus of the group from the company goals

4.4 TEAMS : AN INTRODUCTION OF TEAMS :

Not every group of people is a team! Teams within organizations have unique characteristics and are often created for specific purposes. From Teams come the work done and therefore the term Teamwork has evolved.

Teamwork skills are essential to your success at work, no matter your industry or job title. Working well with clients, colleagues, managers and other people in your workplace can help you complete tasks efficiently while creating an enjoyable environment both for yourself and others.

Teamwork skills are the qualities and abilities that allow you to work well with others during conversations, projects, meetings or other collaborations. Having teamwork skills is dependent on your ability to communicate well, actively listen and be responsible and honest. There are many other additional soft skills that can help you be an exceptional teammate at work we will discuss more below.

You will be required to work alongside others in every industry at every level in your career. Doing so in an empathetic, efficient and responsible manner can help you accomplish career goals, grow your resume and contribute positively to your organization. It can also help you build rapport with others. Building rapport can lead to deeper working relationships, new connections and possibly new opportunities.

4.4.1 Ways to improve Teamwork skills :

While it can take time and work to improve a soft skill such as teamwork, it is certainly possible to build these qualities. Here are a few steps you can take to improve your teamwork skills :

✔ **Get honest feedback.** It can be difficult to identify your own areas of improvement. Finding a trusted friend, colleague or mentor that can offer you honest feedback about your teamwork strengths and weaknesses can help you improve them.

✔ **Set personal goals.** Using both your own observations and feedback from others to form achievable, relevant and time–constrained goals can help you improve one teamwork skill at a time. Using the SMART goal framework is an easy way to set appropriate goals for your career.

✔ **Practice.** It takes time and practice to see improvements in your skill–set. Pay close attention to your teamwork interactions throughout the day both in and out of work. Take mindful steps to practice the specific qualities you are trying to build.

✔ **Mimic others with strong teamwork skills.** When you see examples of great teamwork, take note and identify why the interaction stood out to you. Apply those qualities in your own interactions when working with others.

Developing teamwork skills can help you both in your career and when seeking new opportunities. Take time to evaluate your current skill set and identify areas for improvement. With time and practice, you can begin building a strong set of teamwork skills.

4.5 TYPES OF TEAMS IN THE WORKPLACE :

Teams have become standard in the business world. Naturally, academic institutions have implemented team–based projects to help prepare students for the workplace. 90 percent of corporate leaders feel today's problems are so complex, that they require teams to provide effective solutions. These leaders believe collaboration can fuel creative thinking and problem solving critical to positive business outcomes. The truth is, there are many different types of teams. Some teams are permanent while others are temporary. Some are part of the corporate hierarchy while others are adjunct. One thing you can be sure of is, your career will involve working with teams. Let's take look at **the most common types of teams in the workplace.**

1. **Department teams :** Departmental teams have been around for quite some time. As a department team, individuals relate to specialty or focus he or she has mastered, with everyone working toward achieving goals outlined in the company's mission statement. Some examples include developer teams at a tech start up or the sales team at a marketing agency. Departmental teams are permanent and typically work on ongoing projects or goals.

2. **Problem–solving teams :** These types of teams are usually temporary and focus on solving a specific issue. For example, after the 2008 financial crisis, several organizational task force teams and governmental committees were created to come up with solutions to help the country climb out of a steep recession. Once guidelines were set in place and plans were formed, the task forces and committees were disbanded.

3. **Virtual teams :** A virtual team can be any type of team that communicates digitally rather than in person. Easier communication tools allow managers to build teams based on strengths and weaknesses rather than geography. It's important for students to master virtual skills early on in their academic career, as conference calls and WebEx presentations have become ubiquitous in the workplace.

4. **Cross–functional teams :** In most business settings, permanent team members are going to collaborate with other departments to tackle certain events for the company – such a new product launch. In these situations communication between internal departments is crucial in order to address the project goals.

5. **Self–managed teams :** These types of teams are the most empowered, as they have power to make decisions. Each team member brings

a certain skill set to the table to make informed decisions, complete assignments or deliver services for customers. Companies that implement self–managed teams say their employees tend to feel more ownership of the project.

There are many types of teams that have become commonplace in companies. It's crucial for professors to not only help students understand how business teams operate, but to also give them the tech tools and data necessary to see how these interactions work in real time. Building teamwork is key across academia and business, so it is important to tackle challenges early on that could lead to dysfunctional teams down the road.

4.6 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF TEAMWORK IN COMPANIES :

Teamwork is a very much desirable practice; it is not exempted of drawbacks. Let us see some advantages and disadvantages of teamwork in companies.

4.6.1 Advantages of Teamwork :

It is always better to start with the good news. Even though there are drawbacks that we will see later, teamwork has multiple virtues that make it a habit to adopt in almost any company. Let's look at some.

- **Increases productivity :** Whichever way you look at it, well applied, teamwork is a pump to raise the team's performance to notably. Teamwork allows you to distribute tasks so that each person takes care of the tasks for which he or she is better qualified. In addition, it will be easier to avoid work duplication, which will save time. And we leave for the end the most important thing : by sharing tasks and spaces, ideas flow and creativity soars, which increases performance beyond the individual capacities of each person.It is more pleasant, although there are people who prefer working alone, human beings like to share their experiences with others, and that is evident. Teamwork can provide extra energy at low times. Also, on an emotional level, feeling accompanied is more satisfying than working alone. All of this could have repercussions on important factors, such as absenteeism or job rotation.

- **Increases motivation :** Feeling part of a team is a spur to motivation. Sharing successes means having extra fuel for the day to day; doing the same thing with failures helps them to better deal with them and to seek joint solutions to overcome them and prevent them from recurring. Knowing that you have close support and that you work for a common purpose will make the team reach farther than a single person would.

- **Provides more learning opportunities :** People, who form a team; come from diverse backgrounds, their ways of being are different, they have training and all kinds of different professional and life experiences. It will be a continuous opportunity for them to continue

learning things. Teamwork can enrich people both professionally and on a personal level, and that is priceless.

- **Facilitates organization :** To Plan and organize for a group is easier than doing so for individuals. Both communication and resource allocation will be easier to do if we target a few teams than targeting a large number of individuals. All this should improve, in addition, the coordination of all the people/teams that are part of the company.

4.6.2 Disadvantages of Teamwork :

And now we go with what's not so beautiful. Although well–conducted teamwork can offer great satisfaction, it won't always be easy to get things going like they should. Within the group, conflicts can arise or generate time waste and energy loss that might end up causing that each one leaves the way they came. Let's look at some possible problems.

- **The group can be divided into subgroups :** This one's a classic. Sometimes, as soon as a problem arises, the group will split. On other occasions, it will be the previous division that will generate the conflicts. Usually, the subgroups will be formed based on personal affinities and will cause some people to end up defending ideas or positions based on such sympathies and not based on professional criteria. Failing to remedy this can lead not only to a decline in performance, but also to a breakdown of the team as a whole. To avoid this, it is advisable to encourage interaction among all members of the group and be clear that a divided team will be weaker.

- **Someone can try to impose their judgment :** Although teamwork should be guided by a leader, this should not be confused with imposing one criterion above that of others. Whether it is the boss or someone else who takes the initiative, all opinions must be respected and taken into account. Otherwise, we will lose the opportunity to take advantage of some good ideas, and we will be sowing the seeds for discord.

- **The team could waste too much time :** For the group to feel motivated, it is desirable that all of its members – or at least most of them – agree with the decisions that the team makes, and sometimes that won't be easy and will involve investing a great deal of time in reaching a common position. At other times, being in a group can generate distractions if the conversations are directed towards personal issues or matters that have nothing to do with the work that has to be carried out. You have to be careful with these kind of situations or else the results of the work will suffer.

- **Performance can decrease :** Especially when the groups are too large, there is this phenomenon in which some of the people who are in the team will work less than they would individually, hoping that the rest of the group will compensate for their reluctance. To avoid this kind of situation, it will be necessary to involve all the

members of the group and to control that everyone is putting their grain of sand in order for the work to go forward effectively.

• **Some people can cause problems :** Teamwork is not for everyone. Some people even see it as proper, complete torture; they won't feel comfortable and will cause problems continuously. Don't force them to do it. Look for other solutions, such as allowing them to be more autonomous in their work.

As you can see, even though teamwork is, in theory, a good thing, it must be put into practice in such a way that it doesn't end up causing more harm than good. To finish, and while you put your head to think how to make your teamwork go smooth, we leave you with a sentence for you to reflect on :

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go accompanied" – African Proverb.

It really can be important for a company owner to decide how much teamwork will benefit their business and whether or not they should encourage it. There are several benefits that can be gained from it, including an increase in production.

❑ **Check Your Progress :**

• **Choose the Correct Answer :**

1. There are mainly two types of groups :

   (a) Unilateral and bilateral   (b) Primary and secondary

   (c) Solo and duo   (d) Mono and Poly

2. "If you want to go fast, go alone; If you want to go far, go _____"
   – African Proverb.

   (a) Accompanied   (b) Together

   (c) Solo   (d) Hitherto

3. The group can be divided into _____.

   (a) More groups   (b) Extra groups

   (c) Multiple groups   (d) Sub groups

4. 90 percent of corporate leaders feel today's problems are so_____, that they require teams to provide effective solutions.

   (a) Simplified   (b) Complex   (c) Unified   (d) Pluralistic

5. The main types of Communication occur typically in one of the three ways :

   (a) Diagonal, horizontal and vertical

   (b) Upward, downward and direct

   (c) Verbal, nonverbal and visual

   (d) None of the above

4.7 LET US SUM UP :

The life cycle of teams can often closely resemble various stages in individual development. In order to maintain group effectiveness, individuals should be aware of key stages as well as methods to avoid becoming stuck along the way. Good leadership skills combined with knowledge of group development will help any group perform at its peak level. Teams, though similar, are different from groups in both scope and composition. Groups are often small collections of individuals with various skill sets that combine to address a specific issue, whereas teams can be much larger and often consist of people with overlapping abilities working toward a common goal.

Many issues that can plague groups can also hinder the efficacy of a team. Problems such as social loafing or groupthink can be avoided by paying careful attention to team member differences and providing clear definitions for roles, expectancy, measurement, and rewards. Because many tasks in today's world have become so complex, groups and teams have become an essential component of an organization's success. The success of the team/group rests within the successful management of its members and making sure all aspects of work are fair for each member.

4.8 ANSWERS FOR CHECK YOUR PROGRESS :

Check Your Progress :

   1. (b)   **2.** (a)   **3.** (d)   **4.** (b)   **5.** (c)

4.9 GLOSSARY :

Formal – official, proper, organized

Complex – made up of multiple parts, composite, not simple

Informal – not organized, not ceremonious

Repercussions –

Affinities – the fact of and manner in which something is related to another, any passionate love for anything

4.10 ASSIGNMENT :

1. Explain the importance of group communication in an organization.

2. What are primary and secondary groups ?

3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of group communication

4. Describe the types of Teams at work place.

5. Write and explain the advantages and disadvantages of Team work in company.

4.11 ACTIVITIES :

1.   Blind Retriever :

The goal of Blind Retriever is to guide a blindfolded person to a certain point or a hidden object. The game is a great way to test how your employees work together under pressure and how well they respond to instructions. To play, split your team into small groups, blindfolding one person on each team. The first team that can successfully direct their blindfolded colleague to a hidden object wins.

2.   Human Knot :

Human Knot makes for a fun activity.

First, have your team form a circle. Have everyone put their right hands in the air and grab onto someone's hand across the circle. Then tell them to link left hands with someone else across the circle.

See if they can untangle themselves without letting go of anyone's hand. This activity lends importance to groups and team relevance in collective task.

4.12 CASE STUDY :

Burger King Case Study

The likely strategy that Burger King is pursuing is the broad–differentiation strategy. By acquiring Tim Horton, BK will gain access to a broad range of customers by offering not only burgers and sandwiches, but coffee and baked goods as well. By purchasing Tim Horton, Burger King will become the third–largest fast food restaurant company in the world, with about $22 billion in system sales (mostly franchised) and over 18,000 restaurants across 100 countries Burger King is known for using tax–cutting strategies.They have been able to reduce their worldwide taxes by more than 60% over the last few years. By purchasing Tim Horton, BK can change its tax domicile to Canada and save millions by switching to the favorable corporate Income tax rates. The US corporate tax rate is 35%, whereas the Canadian corporate tax rate is 30%, before various deductions and loopholes. Although, the deal is good news for the Investors and the share prices of the companies have gone up, the two major competitors– Mcdonald's and Subway are likely to remain unfazed. Even if Tim Horton and BK merge locations, Mcdonald's and Subway will still have more locations globally. Mcdonald's already offers its own cafe line and Subway offers coffee and baked goods as well.As there are no laws being broken in BK acquiring Tim Horton and moving their WHQL to Canada, I think they will be successful in cutting their tax costs.

1.   What is the likely reaction of competitors ?

2.   Do you think they will be successful ?

4.13 FURTHER READINGS :

1. Soft Skills for Everyone

    Author : Jeff Butterfield

    Publication : Cengage India Pvt. Ltd.

2. Personality Development and Soft Skills

    Author : Barun K Mitra

    Publication : Oxford University Press

3. English Communication Skills and Professionalism

    Author : Abhishek Chandel

    Publication : Enhances Research Publication

BLOCK SUMMARY

The block is the accumulation of Soft Skills and other important elements included in it. Soft skills are the most needed skill in present time. It has talked about the interpersonal skills to get along with the people, its importance and its varied facets. It has incorporated the importance of Communication skills at the work place and lastly it has explained in the 4th unit on, how successfully one can co ordinate and co operate in groups and teams. These all elements collectively can make an individual successful in life.

BLOCK ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the steps or process for online soft skill training

2. Write a brief note on soft skills.

3. Write the basic manners and office courtesies in terms of Interpersonal skills.

4. How can you develop your interpersonal skills ?

5. Elaborate at length the importance of communication soft skills and also explain how to apply them, no matter what your role is.

6. Write and explain the personal attributes in the context of communication soft skills.

7. Discuss the importance and role of corporate communication in an organization.

8. Explain the concept of Team and discuss the ways to improve Team work.