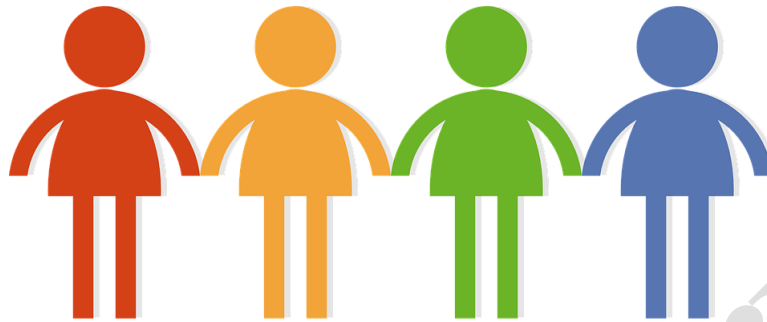# Group Behavior

Concept

Individuals form groups. They live in groups. They move in groups. They work in groups. Groups are important. They influence work and work behavior. They cannot be ignored. They exert significant influence on the organization. They are inseparable from organization. They are useful for the organization. They form foundation of human resources. The study of group behavior is important. Individual and group behavior differs from each other. Group behavior affects productivity.

The importance of group behavior has been realized from time to time. Elton Mayo and his associates way back in 1920 conducted the famous Hawthorne experiments and came to know that the group behavior have major impact on productivity.
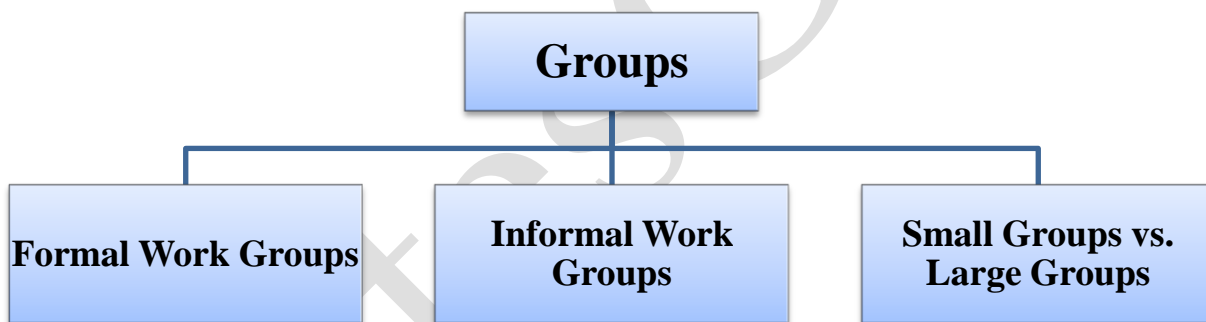
A **group** can be defined as two or more interacting and interdependent individuals who come together to achieve particular objectives. A **group behavior** can be stated as a course of action a group takes as a family.

Therefore, group behavior in organizations tends to follow the organizational norms and rules wherein the employees are expected to be disciplined, follow orders, and work to the requirements of the organization rather than their own whims and fancies. Indeed, the extreme form of groups conforming to the common codes of behavior is the armed forces wherein all members at whatever level they are in are expected to follow the orders of their superiors. On the other hand, organizations such as Google and Facebook are less hierarchical and less structured with employees being allowed to work on their pet projects for a certain period every week. The difference here is that in the armed forces and many organizations, the boss is always right whereas in the startups and the new economy or the knowledge sector, the rules tend to be less rigid. Most organizations fall between these two extremes wherein the employees are encouraged, persuaded, and even ordered to conform to the norms of the group with some latitude and freedom being allowed for them to exercise their independence.

Characteristics of a Group

a) 2 or more persons (if it is one person, it is not a group)

b) Formal social structure (the rules of the game are defined)

c) Common fate (they will swim together)

d) Common goals (the destiny is the same and emotionally connected)

e) Face-to-face interaction (they will talk with each other)

f) Interdependence (each one is complimentary to the other)

g) Self-definition as group members (what one is who belongs to the group)

h) Recognition by others (yes, you belong to the group).

Types of Groups

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                    │   Groups     │
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│ Formal Work    │ │ Informal Work  │ │ Small Groups   │
│ Groups         │ │ Groups         │ │ vs.            │
│                │ │                │ │ Large Groups   │
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There can be different types of groups that might exist in organization. Each group plays crucial role in achieving organizational effectiveness.

1. Formal Work Groups

Formal work groups are formed by the organizations. These groups are formed in order to help the organization to achieve its specific goals. The goals of formal work group are determined according to the needs of the organization. For example, purchase committee, quality control group, disciplinary action committees are the formal groups constituted by an organization. These groups are established to accomplish certain organizational goals such as increasing product quality, safety, discipline, etc. in an organization.

There are different types of formal groups in an organization:

- **Command group**: Command group consists of subordinates who are directly responsible to a supervisor. Command groups are structured by the organization. The subordinates

working in enforcement department of a town planning authority are reporting to and directly responsible to the enforcement officer. This group is responsible for removal of encroachment on public land. There is a specific department established for the purpose and is busy throughout with its activities.

- **Interest group**: Task group is formed to complete a project. This type of group is also known as task force. The job of the group is to complete the task within allotted time period. If one task is completed they are allotted new task to work with. Project teams, quality circles, audit teams are the examples of task group.

2. Informal Work Groups

It is just like the shadow of the formal organization. It is because organizational members perceive that it is difficult for their organization to formally fulfill some of the bare needs and feel that membership in a group can help them to achieve their goals and meet their needs. example when a group of five factory workers who go for a picnic an movie together to satisfy their common need for affiliation and friendship, this is the case of an informal group.

Informal groups can be broadly divided into following types:

- **Interest Group:** A group of employees coming together for attaining a common purpose. Employees coming together for payment of bonus increase in salary, medical benefits and other facilities are the examples of interest group. The people with common interest come together.

- **Membership Group:** A group of persons belonging to the same profession knowing each other e.g. teachers of the same faculty in the university.

- **Friendship Group:** A group outside the plant or office, having similar views, tastes, opinions, belonging to same age group. They form clubs and associations based on the friendship.

- **Reference Group:** It is a primary group where people shape their ideas, beliefs, values etc. They want support from the group. Family is an important reference group. A team of players playing a game is a reference group.

3. Small Groups vs. Large Groups

The size of a group is normally measured by the number of full-time members who are involved in achieving the group's goals. On the basis of number of members, a group can be a small or large group.

- **Small Groups:** In a small group, members are likely to know everybody and interact regularly. In a small group, it is relatively easier for members to share information and recognize individual's contribution to the group.

- **Large Groups:** In a large group, there are so many members. Because of many members, they are less likely to know one another and may have little personal contact with each other on a day-to-day basis. As a result, there exists lower level of interaction among members of this group and it makes information sharing difficult among them. Sometimes, the factors which individuals consider lead to their own contributions to the group may become unimportant to the group, which ultimately reduces their motivation and commitment towards group. Therefore, people normally tend to be less satisfied in larger groups.