

GROUPS :DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS

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GROUPS :DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS

OBJECTIVE:To understand the meaning of groups and its Types

LEARNING OUTCOME: The student will be able to understand what is a group and its types

Group Definition:

A Group is basically an assemblage of people. It can be understood as a collection of individuals (two or more), who come together and interact with each other, so as to achieve the objectives.

Sherif and Sherif (1969) define a group as follows “A group is a social unit which consists of a number of individuals who stand in role and status relationship to one another stabilized in some degree at the time and who possess a set of value or norms of their own regulating their behaviour atleast in matter of consequence to the group.”

The terms like social unit, role, status relationship, values, or norms used in the above definition need explanation.

Social Unit:

Social unit means a kind of bounded system of interaction delineated from others i.e., an in group feeling or a feeling of oneness according to Sheriff.

Role and Status Relationship:

Every individual member of the group has a status and some role to play in the functions of the group, to achieve the group goal. The status of the individual member of the group determines his role and functions in the group.

The terms role and status relation and norms refer to particular forms of interaction. According to Stogdill (1959) the first step in understanding the nature of a group is preliminary grasp of what is meant by interaction as said by Sheriff .

Values and Norms:

Norms and values refer to a set of standards which regulate important behaviour and functions of group members. However, members of a group may not be able to develop norms for every small or big problem which they encounter

during their tenure in the group. Hence, norms must be established to regulate important activities frequently engaged in and to maintain the group as a unit as defined by Sheriff.

The above definition includes the essential properties of groups. Sheriff and Sheriff are of opinion that this definition has much in common with the definitions of sociologists like Bales (1950), Blau and Scott (1962), Har (1962) and Social Psychologists like Bonner (1959), Cartwright and Zander (1960).

Group is defined by **Baron and Byrne (1988)** as :

“Groups consist of two or more persons engaged in social interaction who have some stable structure relationship with one another, are interdependent, share common goals and perceive that they are in fact part of a group.” Thus when two or more individuals gather together to serve a common purpose or common motive it is called a group.

Putting all the definitions together it can be said:-

- (1) A group consists of more than one person.
- (2) They meet together to satisfy some common motive or common purpose say to collect money for flood affected persons, or national defence fund. The common motive may be biogenic or sociogenic.
- (3) The group may disintegrate when the common motive is satisfied. This refers to a temporary group like a party or groups formed to collect money for relief fund or to celebrate Ganesh Puja.

Characteristics of a Group

- **Size:** To form a group, it must be having at least two members. Usually, the number of group members ranges from 15 to 20. The more the members in the group, the more complex it is to manage.
- **Goals:** Every group has certain goals and aims, that are the reasons for its existence.

Norms: A group has certain rules and regulations, for interacting with the group members

Structure: It has a structure which helps group to function effectively. Based on the roles and positions held by the members.

Roles: Every member of a group has certain roles and responsibilities, which are assigned, by the group leader.

Interaction: There can be various interaction patterns within the group members , i.e. face to face, telephonic, in writing etc.

- Collective Identity: A group is an aggregation of individuals, which are separately called as members, and collectively called as a group.

Furthermore, a group climate is an emotional setting of the group, that relies on participative spirit, coordination, trust and bonding among the members, open communication and other similar factors.

SUMMARY:

A Group is basically an assemblage of people. It can be understood as a collection of individuals (two or more), who come together and interact with each other, so as to achieve the objectives. There are various definitions of Group and it has well defined characteristics.

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