



**COSMOS
BOOKHIVE**

GROUP DISCUSSION

Covering Latest Topics



Group Discussion for Achievers

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COSMOS BOOKHIVE (P) LTD.

Preface

The much sought after volume on group discussion is in the hands of our valued readers. We have tried to give new concepts and strategies so that our readers could succeed in their GD tests with flying colours.

Group discussion is the real test of the depth of knowledge, personality, and behavioural skills of a candidate. It is a kind of group communication exercise. We have appended all the vital details of group communication in this volume. Case studies fully support the theoretical base, which has been appended in the first few chapters of this volume. We hope that this volume would prove to be extremely useful to the students of all types of competitive examinations.

Some errors may have crept into the volume due to human or machine errors. We would request our valued readers to point out the same and inform the publisher so that the next edition of this volume could become another milestone in the complex realm of group discussion.

Happy Reading!

A. Kumar
Engineering and Management Connoisseur
New Delhi

UNIT—I

1. Motivation, Leadership, and Communication
2. Basic Concepts of Group Discussion
3. Role of Leadership and Communication in GD Sessions

Motivation, Leadership, and Communication



MOTIVATION: AN INTRODUCTION

In order to get work done from people, a manager has to persuade them to attain their respective goals. A rise in the productivity level is the vital goal of every firm. We know that profit is the ultimate goal of all business firms. All human beings have limitations. They may also have some physical problems while at work. The environment of the work place may also not be conducive for the enhancement of their productivity levels. Hence, the manager is required to motivate them. He has to influence their psyche and actions in such a manner as to ensure that they deliver outputs of good quality according to the pre-defined production or output schedules.

We can define motivation *as the process of persuading peers or subordinates to attain the predefined set of goals without any coercive tool*. Motivation is a positive human emotion. The motivated person works to achieve the goals set before him; he does so on his own, without any pressure or coercion. His willingness to execute the job determines the success (or ability) of the manager who motivates him.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MOTIVATION

The following characteristics may be noted:

- (A) **Individuals Differ in Terms of Motivation:** Every person has a different goal set. Money may not be a motivating factor for all the employees. The higher-order needs of a person may make him forget his basic needs. The example of Mahatma Gandhi is notable in this context. Further, motivation levels also vary from person to person.

- (B) **Individuals May Not be Aware of Motivation Within Them:** Hawthorne experiments, conducted in the USA during the thirties of the last century, have confirmed this fact. The individual may not know that he is being motivated to take a particular action but he would certainly take that action, without being aware of the cause behind it.
- (C) **Causes of Motivation Vary:** This is quite natural. Motivations of each individual change from time-to-time even though that individual may continue to behave in the same manner.
- (D) **Motivations are Expressed in Different Manners by Employees:** Every person would express his motivations in a different manner. That is because his needs get translated into actions in a manner that is different from those of all others. One individual with a strong need for security, may play it safe and avoid accepting the responsibility for the fear of failing. Another individual, with the same security need, may ask for more responsibility to prove his worth in his organisation.
- (E) **Motivation is a Complex Phenomenon:** That is because all humans are complex creatures, both physically and mentally. A complicated process goes on in the mind of an individual. Education, family background, maturity, and environment of the individual are also the decisive factors in this context. An apparently favourable motivational tool may not lead the worker to the result desired by his motivator. *Example:* A worker may be shifted to a new, department with adequate ventilation. More productivity may be expected from him, but he may deliver poor production output. The reasons could be many; one of these could be that he did not want to leave the company of his colleagues of his old department (even at the cost of hazards of ventilation in his old department).

LEADERSHIP

Concise Oxford Dictionary (2000) defines the term leader as, “*the person who leads, commands, or precedes a group, organisation, or country.*”

According to the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, “*Leadership refers to the relationship between an individual and a group around some common interest and behaving in a manner directed at or determined by him (the leader).*”

In the organisational context, leaders have created many success stories, which are the cherished memories of the entire mankind. Popular leaders of the world were Winston Churchill, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Indira Gandhi, Ho Chi Minh, Henry Ford, Lee Iacocca, Jack Welch, Azim Hashem Premji, John F. Kennedy, Bill Gates, N.R. Narayana Murthy, and many more.

According to Chester Bernard, *“Leadership may be described as the quality of behaviour of individuals whereby they guide people in their activities as organised efforts.”*

Management thinkers like G.R. Terry opine that a leader shows the way by his example. He is not a pusher. He pulls the people along with him by displaying exemplary courage, fine quality of work, and integrity of character. He is adored by his group. The juniors or followers of a leader reach unknown heights of performance when they are guided and motivated by him. The will to do so is triggered by their leader. Lukewarm desires (of the followers) for achievement are transformed into burning passions for successful accomplishment of tasks (allocated to these followers).

TASKS OF A LEADER

We can define three types of situations in the context of the tasks to be performed by a leader, as follows.

Tasks of a Leader as a Group Head

A leader has to perform the following tasks in the context of group operations:

- (A) **Serves as an Example for the Group:** The leader serves as an example for the group. He is a role model who is emulated by his subordinates. He influences the thought processes and behaviour patterns of his subordinates. Hence, they try to work (and behave) in the same manner in which he works (and behaves).
- (B) **Symbolises the Group:** The leader becomes synonymous with the group or firm. He represents the interests, motivations, and passions of the group. *Example:* Bill Gates represents the ambitions, and interests of Microsoft Corporation.
- (C) **Acts as a Father Figure:** He also acts as a father figure of the group. He protects the members of the firm or organisation

through his policies, directives, and vision. By identifying themselves with their leader, the members of the group get strength as well as a feeling of security. This fact is valid for operations of departments, sections, project groups, and temporary work groups as well. *Example:* Ratan Tata is leading the Tata group in the honorary capacity even after his retirement.

- (D) **Forced to Act as a Scapegoat:** He is, sadly, a scapegoat of the group. All the actions of the group are a result of his direct (or indirect) policies. Hence, he is responsible when such policies are converted into actions. His juniors or peers simply carry out his plans. Even if they are a part of the group that defined such plans, the actual creator or the dominant force is the leader. Hence, in the case of failure, the leader is criticised or declared as 'defeated.' On the other hand, if he succeeds, it may be deemed a routine for the organisation or department he heads. Then, encomium may not be bestowed upon him. *Example:* The CEO of Polaris was arrested in Indonesia due to the acts of financial mismanagement.
- (E) **Plans, Directs and Executes Group Goals:** The leader involves his subordinates in the tasks of the department or group. He gets work done from them. He plans the execution of the task, gives directions to his subordinates, and motivates them to deliver tangible results. *Example:* The President of a travel agency guides his employee in making a tour programme for a client.

Tasks of a Leader as a Part of a Group

The following tasks are vital:

- (A) **Acts as an Expert:** He is an expert in his job. He has the knowledge and skills to get work done from his juniors.
- (B) **Represents the Group:** He represents his group when he interacts with groups in the same firm or with groups outside the firm, *i.e.*, the ones belonging to its external environment.
- (C) **Controls Intra-group Relations:** He guides intra-group relations and reduces conflict among them.
- (D) **Motivates:** He motivates his team members to get desired results that have been defined for his group.

Tasks of a Leader in Setting and Achieving Group Goals

The following tasks are important:

- (A) **Objective Definition:** The leader can define the objective and other goals of the firm. *Example:* A CEO defines the objectives of his firm.
- (B) **Planning:** The leader can make long-term, short-term, and medium-term plans. He should get advice from his subordinates in this context. *Example:* A GM (Production) makes the production plan for a month.
- (C) **Execution:** The leader guides the subordinates or group members towards the group goal. He helps them execute the necessary tasks that need to be performed to achieve such goals. *Example:* A floor supervisor ensures that steam press workers under his control make the requisite number of car tyres.

SPECTRUM OF LEADERSHIP STYLES

In this spectrum, four types of distinct leadership styles have been identified, as follows:

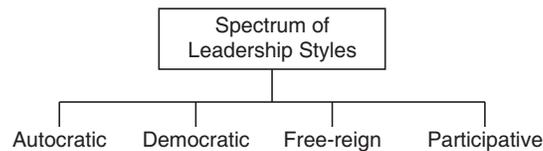
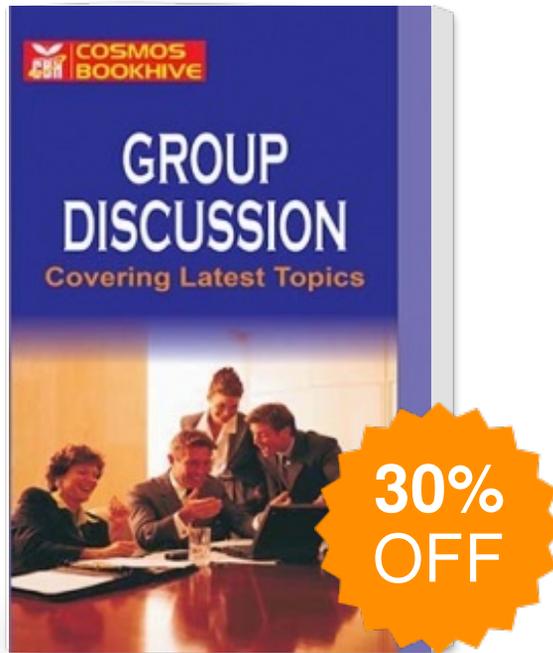


Fig. 1.1. Spectrum of leadership styles

- (A) **Autocratic Leader:** It is also called Authoritarian Leadership Style. The leader decides all the policy and strategy issues. He defines the tasks for his team members. He wants the team members to be loyal and obedient towards him. He uses the carrot and stick policy quite often. He shows greater concern for work (or goals) than for his team members. He is the key person of his group. If he is absent, his team may not be able to perform. The autocratic leader uses his coercive or authoritative power to control his team members. However, at times, he may also give rewards to them. This type of leadership brings results quickly. It is effective too. The chain of command and division of work are clear to all, but one-way communication and autocratic behaviour of the leader lead to

Group Discussion



Publisher : **Cosmos Bookhive**

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