

Social Influence And Group Processes

NCERT TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

1. Compare and contrast formal and informal groups, and in groups and out groups.

Ans. Formal Groups:

- (i) The functions of a formal group are explicitly stated, as in an office organization, or social work club.
- (ii) They have rigidly stated functions and the roles of the members are well-defined or imposed.
- (iii) Formal groups have a chain of command for decision-making, e.g., military or bureaucracy.

Informal Groups:

- (i) Informal decision-making process may exist as parallel mechanisms.
- (ii) Members of informal groups usually feel more comfortable to take decision in informal settings, e.g., tea time group or lunch group.
- (iii) There are no explicit rules and regulations for informal group.

In-group:

- (i) It is generally considered as 'me, my, we, or our' group.
- (ii) People in in-group are viewed as having desirable behaviour and admirable traits.
- (iii) It is always good, strong, cohesive, kind-hearted, open, relaxing and cool.

Out-group:

- (i) It is considered as 'they' group.
- (ii) Members are often perceived negatively.
- (iii) It is always bad, dirty, damaging, dangerous and has people with negative emotions.

2. Are you a member of a certain group? Discuss what motivated are you to join that groups.

Ans. Definitely I am member of various groups. In other words, I will say that there is no dimension of life where I am not related to a group because we all are social beings and for everything, we are dependent on this or that group. There are various reasons which

motivate me and everybody to join a group. Some of them are as follows:

(i) Security: Groups reduce the feeling of insecurity. Being with people gives a sense of comfort and protection.

(ii) Status: When the group is perceived as important high profile and well known, then the members also feel recognized and 'experience a sense of power', e.g., being a student of high profile school.

(iii) Self-esteem: Being a member of a prestigious group enhances the individual's self-concept.

(iv) Satisfaction of one's Psychological and Social Needs: Groups satisfy one's social and psychological needs such as sense of belongingness, giving and receiving attention, love and power.

(v) Group Achievement: Groups help in achieving the goals which cannot be attained individually.

(vi) Provide Knowledge and Information: Group membership provides us knowledge and information and broadens our views.

3. How does Tuck man's stage model help you to understand the formation of groups?

Ans. According to **Tuck man**, group formation takes place in following stages:

(i) Forming Stage: When group-members first meet, there is a great deal of uncertainty about the group, the goal, and how it is to be achieved.

(ii) Storming: There is a stage of inter group conflict. There is conflict among members about how the target of the group is to be achieved, who is to control the group and its resources, and who is to perform what task.

(iii) Norming: Group-members by this time develop norms related to group behaviour. This leads to development of a positive group identity.

(iv) Performing: At this stage, the structure of the group has evolved and is accepted by group-members. The group moves towards achieving the group goal.

(v) Adjourning Stage: In this stage, once the function is over or goal is achieved, the group may be disbanded.

These stages help in group formation. Which occurs on the basis of following factors:

(i) Proximity: Individuals with similar background, living in the same complex (e.g., going to the same school) may form groups on the basis of proximity.

(ii) Similarity: It has been observed that more the similarity in the attitudes, interest, beliefs and value system of two persons, greater the likelihood that they would form a group.

(iii) Common Motives and Goals: When a number of people have common objectives or goals, they tend to get together and form a group.

4. How do groups influence our behaviour? (CBSE 2008, 2014)

Ans. I. Group influence our behaviour in following three forms:

• 'Social facilitation' is a form of group influence.

• 'Social facilitation' refers to a concept that performance on specific task is influenced by the mere presence of others.

• Norman Triplett observed that individuals show better performance in presence of others, than when they are performing the same task alone.

Better performance in presence of others is because the person experiences According to arousal, which makes the person react in a more intense manner.

The arousal is because the person feels he or she is being evaluated. Cottrell called this idea **evaluation apprehension**. The person will be praised if performance is good (reward), he/she will be criticised if it is bad (punishment). We wish to get praise and avoid criticism, therefore we try to perform well and avoid criticism.

As in case of complex task, the person may be afraid of making mistakes. And the fear of criticism or punishment is stronger.

If the others present are also performing same task, this is called a **situation of co action**.

When task is simple or a familiar one, performance is better under co-action than when the person is alone.

Task performing can be facilitated and improved or inhibited and worsened by the presence of others. If we are working together in a larger group, the less effort each member puts in. This phenomena is called **social loafing**, based on diffusion of responsibility.

Diffusion of responsibility can also be frequently seen in situations where people are expected to help.

II. 'Social loafing refers to reduction in motivation when people are functioning collectively.

- It is a form of group influence.

(i) Group members feel less responsible for the overall tasks being performed and therefore exert less effort.

(ii) Motivation of members may decrease because they realize that their contributions cannot be evaluated on the individual basis, so to why to work hard.

(iii) The performance of the group is not to be compared with that of the other groups.

(iv) There is improper co-ordination (or no co-ordination) among members.

III. Group polarization is a group influence which refers to the strengthening of groups initial position as a result interaction and discussion.

As a result of group discussion opinion shifts towards more extreme positions than those which they initially held.

In group polarization, it has been found that groups are more likely to take extreme decisions than individuals alone. Group polarization occurs due to the following factors:

(i) In the company of like-minded people, people are likely to hear newer arguments favouring their view-points.

(ii) When people find others also favouring their view-point, they feel that their view is validated by the public. This is a sort of bandwagon effect.

(iii) When people find others having similar views, they are likely to perceive them as in-group.

5. How can you reduce social loafing in groups? Think of any two incidents of social loafing in school. How did you overcome it?

Ans. Social loading is a negative group influence. Which occurs due to defusion of responsibility. For the quality performance of the group, it should be reduced. It can be reduced through the following methods:

(i) By making the efforts of each person identifiable.

(ii) increasing the pressure to work hard (making group-members committed to successful tasks performance).

(iii) increasing the apparent importance or value of a task.

(iv) making people feel that their individual contribution is important.

(v) strengthening group cohesiveness which increases the motivation for successful group outcome.

6. How often do you show conformity in your behaviour? What are the determinants of conformity?

Ans. Conformity: It is a most indirect form of social influence in which individuals change their behaviour or beliefs to correspond more closely to the behaviour of others in the group. It essentially involves yielding to group pressure.

- People conform because it is comfortable.

- Non-conformity is socially undesirable and many a times punishable offence.

- Most people believe that majority is always right, so it is better to conform.

- Whenever individual gets confused and not confident he/she conforms.

- Conformity provides assurance that individual is right.

People conform because of two types of influences:

1. Informational Influence, i.e., influence that results from accepting evidence rather than

reality.

- It is social influence based on individuals desire to be correct—to possess accurate perceptions of the social world.

We conform because we have a strong desire to hold the right views. We want to be correct about various matters so we turn to other persons for guidance as to what is appropriate, e.g., if children see that, in the colony, no body is playing in the park then they get information from the actions of others that | park should not be used as playground. This is behaving according to evidence then from reality.

2. Normative influence, i.e., influence based on a person's desire to be accepted or admired by others. Individual follows the reality and conforms.

We conform in order to meet other's expectations and so to gain their approval, e.g., if we see rules written on the board outside the park that playing in the park is prohibited then children avoid playing there.

Sheriff's experiment known as **auto-kinetic effect** and **Asch's** experiment prove that people do get carried away by the social influence whenever taking decisions.

Determinants of Conformity:

The degree of conformity among the group-members is determined by many factors which are as follows:

1. Size of the Group:

(i) Conformity is greater when the group is small. It happens because it is easier for a deviant member to be noticed in a small group.

(ii) In a large group, if there is strong agreement among most of the members, conformity makes the majority and its norms stronger. In such a case, the minority would be more likely to conform because the group pressure would be stronger.

2. Size of the Minority: When the deviating minority size increases, the likelihood , of conformity decreases.

3. Nature of the Task:

- Where there is something like a correct or an incorrect answer, conformity is more.

- Where answers can vary widely without any answer being correct or incorrect, conformity would be less.

4. Public or Private Expression of Behaviour:

- If the group-members are asked to give their answers publicly, conformity is more.

- Less conformity is found under private expression.

5. Personality Characteristics:

- Some individuals have a conforming personality that is tendency to change their behaviour according to what others say or do in most situations and vice- versa.

7. Why do people obey even when they know that their behaviour may be harming others?

Explain. (Delhi Board 2014)

Ans. Obedience: It is most **direct form of social influence**. Obedience refers to accepting commands/orders from the authority. **Authority** refers to a person who has inherent power to give reward or punishment.

If a person has power over another, obedience can be demanded; such a person usually has the means to enforce orders.

- Milligram's studies seem to suggest that the ordinary people are willing, may be with some, reluctance, to harm an innocent person if ordered by someone in authority.

It has been observed that obedience to authority relieves the individual from the responsibility of their actions.

- Individual believes that if he/she will not obey then it will attract penalty.

- Authority commands for destructive obedience are gradually increased from lesser to greater levels of violence.

Sometimes events involved in destructive obedience move so quickly, that the people obeying orders have little time for thinking logically.

8. What are the benefits of co-operation?

Ans. Groups may be co-operative or competitive. Technically, the behaviour that yields maximal joint profit for all the parties involved is called co-operation. The behaviour that yields maximal relative gain is labelled competition.

• Co-operative goals are those, which are defined in such a way that each individual can attain the goal if other members are also attaining their goals. There is interdependence in goal attainment.

Effects of co-operation:

- Goal achievement becomes easy.
- Interpersonal relations get strengthened.
- Cohesiveness rises in the group.
- Group-members become ready to work for others.
- Willingness to accept other's divergent view-point.

9. How is one's identity formed?

Ans. • **Identity** refers to the aspect of one's self-concept that is based on group-membership.

- Our identity tells us what we are in a larger context.
- After one develops an identity, he/she internalises the norms emphasized in a group and adopts them.
- Identity provides a member of a group with a shared set of values, beliefs and goals about the social world.
- Identity helps to co-ordinate attitude and behaviour.
- The development of identity leads to the devaluation of the out group.

10. What are some of the causes of intergroup conflict? Think of any international conflict. Reflect on the human price of this conflict.

Ans. • Conflict is a process in which either an individual or a group perceives that the others have opposite interest, and both try to contradict each other.

- In such conflicts intense feeling of 'We' and 'They' dominate.
- Both the groups believe that only their group (in group) will protect their interest. Individual group conflict occurs when the individuals, needs are different from the group's needs, goals or norms. **Inter group conflict** refers to the situation of conflict between groups. It often occurs to maintain the identity of the group different and stronger than the other groups.

Some Major Reasons for Group Conflicts:

1. One major reason is **lack of communication** and faulty communication between both parties. This kind of communication leads to suspicion, i.e., there is a lack of trust, and hence, conflict results.
2. Another reason for inter group conflict is **relative deprivation**. It arises when members of a group compare themselves with the members of another group, and they perceive that they do not have what they desire to have, which the other group has. In other words, they feel that they are not doing well in comparison to other groups. This may lead to feelings of deprivation and discontentment, which may trigger conflict.
3. Another cause of conflict arises when one party believes that it is **better than the other**, and what it is saying should be done. When this does not happen, both parties start accusing each other.
4. A feeling that the other group **does not respect the norms** of my group, and actually violates those norms, can cause conflict.
5. Desire for **retaliation** for some harm done in the past could be another reason for conflict.
6. **Biased perceptions** are at the root of most conflicts.

7. Research has shown that when acting in groups, people are more competitive as well as more aggressive than when they are on their own. Groups compete over scarce resource, both material resources (e.g., territory) and money as well as social resources (e.g., respect and esteem).

8. **Perceived inequality** is another reason for conflict.

9. According to **Gardener Murphy** most conflicts begin in the minds of men and then go to the field.

Gardener Murphy, in his book '**In the Minds of Men**', explains intergroup conflicts at three levels:

(a) Structural Level: It includes high rates of poverty, economic and social stratification, inequality, limited political and social opportunity, e.g., Tribal areas of Jharkhand and West Bengal becoming fertile ground for Naxal movement.

(b) Group Level: Social identity, realistic conflict between groups over resources and unequal power relations between groups lead to conflicts, e.g., Dalits in India or Women Empowerment Movement.

(c) Individual Level: It includes beliefs, biased attitudes and personality characteristics. These are important determinants.