

Characteristics of Group Discussions


Some of the salient features common to all group discussions are as follows:

(i) Interface: A basic feature of group discussions is the interaction among the various members of the group. They see, hear and communicate with each other orally by paying attention to each other.

(ii) Leader and Members: Group discussions are effective only when there is a group of members and a leader. The leader has to summarize facts and information, integrate them, stimulate thinking and agree to a unanimous solution of the problem. The members of the group become actively related to each other in their respective roles.

(iii) Participation: The effectiveness and efficiency of a **group discussion** depend, to a large extent, upon the active participation of the members.

(iv) Interpersonal Attraction: Another characteristic feature of a group discussion is interpersonal attraction. As long as interaction continues, the likes, dislikes, behavior and temperament of members are known to each other



Among them, empathy develops and as such they share each others problems.

(v) Pressure to Conform: In a group discussion, there is always an element of pressure to conform to norms. The pre-defined and established standards are always enforced and followed.

(vi) Conflict: A **conflict** is a difference or disagreement among the members of the group, which often arise during deliberations and discussions. A conflict is inevitable and usually develops when alternative solutions are present. It can stimulate the members to find new solutions to the problem. Thus, conflict is not necessarily bad. But if it arises due to the political behavior of the members it will have dysfunctional consequences.



Purpose of Group Discussions

Group discussions may serve various purposes. Some of them are:

- (i) To reach a solution on an issue of concern
- (ii) To generate new ideas or new approaches to solving a problem
- (iii) For selecting candidates after the written test for employment or for admission to educational institutes
- (iv) To provide us with an avenue to train ourselves in various interpersonal skills

