**GROUP DYNAMICS AND EDUCATION**

It is a relatively new concept in the socio – psychological field. Etymologically, the word, Dynamic, is derived from a Greek word, which means ‘force’. Thus, Group Dynamics stands for the forces operating in a group. A group is constantly interacting, thereby bringing about a perpetual change in the personality and behaviour of the members constituting the group. The behaviour is not static. Group Dynamics means the change of behaviour through interaction in the group. It refers to the forces which operate in group situations. It studies the structure of the group and other phenomenon which emerge out of group interaction.

• According to the Goods dictionary – “Group Dynamics implies an interactive psychological relationship in which members of a group develop a common perception based on feelings and emotions. These inter-simulative relationships may be described by the term Group Dynamics.”

• Kretch & Crutch - Group Dynamics implies changes that take place within groups.

Thus group dynamics is the study of forces exerted by the group on the individual or the individual on the group.

**Importance of Group Dynamism:**

1. The group can influence the thinking of its members. The members are always influenced by the interactions of other members in the group.

2. A group with a good leader performs better as compared to a group with weak leader.

3. The group can give the effect of synergy, that is, if the group consists of positive thinkers then its output is more than the double every time.

4. Group dynamism can give job satisfaction to the members.

5. The group can also bring team spirit among the members.

6. Even the attitude, perceptions, and ideas of members depend on group dynamism. For example, the negative thinkers can be converted to positive thinkers with the help of the facilitator.

7. If the group works as a cohesive group, the cooperation and convergence can result in maximiza­tion of productivity.

8. Lastly, group dynamism can reduce the labour unrest and labour turnover due to emotional attach­ment among the group members.

**GROUP COHESIVENESS**

### In the social science, group cohesion refers to the processes that keep members of a social group connected. Terms such as attraction, solidarity, and morale are often used to describe group cohesion. It is thought to be one of the most important characteristics of a group, and has been linked to group performance, [intergroup conflict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_conflict) and therapeutic change.

Group cohesion, as a scientifically studied property of groups, is commonly associated with Kurt Lewin and his student, [Leon Festinger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leon_Festinger). Lewin defined group cohesion as the willingness of individuals to stick together, and believed that without cohesiveness a group could not exist. As an extension of Lewin’s work, Festinger (along with [Stanley Schachter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanley_Schachter) and Kurt Back) described cohesion as, “the total field of forces which act on members to remain in the group.” Later, this definition was modified to describe the forces acting on individual members to remain in the group, termed attraction to the group. Since then, several models for understanding the concept of group cohesion have been developed, including Albert Carron’s hierarchical model and several bi-dimensional models (vertical v. horizontal cohesion, task v. social cohesion, belongingness and morale, and personal v. social attraction). Before Lewin and Festinger, there were, of course, descriptions of a very similar group property. For example, Emile Durkheim described two forms of solidarity (mechanical and organic), which created a sense of collective conscious and an emotion-based sense of community.

**Factors**

The forces that push group members together can be positive (group-based rewards) or negative (things lost upon leaving the group). The main factors that influence group cohesiveness are: members’ similarity, group size, entry difficulty, group success and external competition and threats. Often, these factors work through enhancing the identification of individuals with the group they belong to as well as their beliefs of how the group can fulfill their personal needs.

**Similarity of group members**

Similarity of group members has different influences on group cohesiveness depending on how to define this concept. Lott and Lott (1965) who refer to interpersonal attraction as group cohesiveness conducted an extensive review on the literature and found that individuals’ similarities in background (e.g., race, ethnicity, occupation, age), attitudes, values and personality traits have generally positive association with group cohesiveness.

On the other hand, from the perspective of social attraction as the basis of group cohesiveness, similarity among group members is the cue for individuals to categorize themselves and others into either an ingroup or outgroup. In this perspective, the more prototypical similarity individuals feel between themselves and other ingroup members, the stronger the group cohesiveness will be.

In addition, similar background makes it more likely that members share similar views on various issues, including group objectives, communication methods and the type of desired leadership. In general, higher agreement among members on group rules and norms results in greater trust and less dysfunctional conflict. This, in turn, strengthens both emotional and task cohesiveness.

**Entry difficulty**

Difficult entry criteria or procedures to a group tend to present it in more exclusive light. The more elite the group is perceived to be, the more prestigious it is to be a member in that group]. As shown in dissonance studies conducted by Aronson and Mills (1959) and confirmed by Gerard and Mathewson (1966), this effect can be due to dissonance reduction. Dissonance reduction can occur when a person has endured arduous initiation into a group; if some aspects of the group are unpleasant, the person may distort their perception of the group because of the difficulty of entry. Thus, the value of the group increases in the group member's mind.

**Group performance**

Group performance, like exclusive entry, increases the value of group membership to its members and influences members to identify more strongly with the team and to want to be actively associated with it.

**External competition and threat**

When members perceive active competition with another group, they become more aware of members’ similarity within their group as well as seeing their group as a means to overcome the external threat or competition they are facing. Both these factors increase group cohesiveness; leaders throughout human history have been aware of this and focused the attention of their followers on conflicts with external enemies when internal cohesion was threatened. Similar effects can be brought about by facing an ‘objective’ external threat or challenge (such as natural disaster)

**primary group and secondary group**

Both primary and secondary groups can be distinguished from each other by the following points:

**(1) Difference in Meaning:**

Primary group is the nucleus of all social organizations. It is characterized by intimate face-to-face association and co-operation.

They are primary in several senses but they are fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of individuals. Family, playgroup and neighborhood are the example of primary group. But secondary groups are large scale groups in which the relationships are relatively casual, impersonal and competitive. They are consciously formed to fulfill some common goals or objectives. Ex-City, Political Party.

**(2) Difference in Size:**

A primary group is very small in size and is confined to a small area. Because it consists of very small number of individuals. But the size of a secondary group is very large and it is spread all over the world. Because it consists of thousands of members who are widespread and scattered all over the world.

**(3) Difference in Stability:**

Primary groups are relatively stable or durable. For example family is a stable organization. But a secondary group may be temporary or permanent. These are temporary groups like flood relief association. As secondary groups are special interest groups after the fulfillment of the interest it automatically vanishes.

**(4) Difference in Co-operation:**

The nature of co-operation in a primary and secondary group also differs from each other. The members of a primary group directly co-operate with each other. They play, sit and discuss together. Because of face to face contact and personal relationships direct co-operation among members is possible. But the members of a secondary group indirectly co­operate with each other. Because there exists indirect relations among the members.

**(5) Difference in Structure:**

According to the type of structure both primary and secondary group can be distinguished from each other. Primary group is based on an informal structure and is very simple. All the members participate in the same process and it is regulated by informal rules and regulations. On the other hand secondary group is based on formal structure and is regulated by a set of formal rules and regulations.

**(6) Difference in Relationships:**

A great deal of differences is found in the relationships among the members of a primary and secondary group. There exist direct, intimate and personal relationships among the members of a primary group. The relations are all inclusive because primary group is relationship directed. But there exists indirect and impersonal relations among the members of a secondary group. Here relations are secondary and formal.

**(7) Difference in the method of social control:**

Both primary and secondary group can be distinguished from each other on the basis of the means by which they exercises control over their members. Primary group exercises controls over its members through informal means such as customs, folkways, mores etc. Secondary group have limited control over its members. But secondary group control the behavior of its members through formal means such as police, jail, court, law etc.

**(8) Difference in Goal:**

Members of a primary group have similar or common aims and objectives. Goal of a particular member is considered as the goal of all other members. But in a secondary group member have different goals. Each individual has his own goals or aims for the fulfillment of which he joins in the group.

**(9) Difference in effect on Personality:**

Both primary and secondary group can be distinguished from each other on the degree by which they affect or determine the personality of an individual. Primary group has a greater influence on the development of personality. It influences the total personality of an individual. But secondary group has a little influence on the development of personality of an individual. It is mainly concerned with a particular aspect of the personality of an individual.

**(10) Differences in Physical Closeness:**

Both primary and secondary group may be distinguished from each other on the grounds of physical nearness. Members of a primary group live in physical proximity to each other. There exits face –to face relations among the member. But members of a secondary group the member of secondary group.

**(11)** The relationship among the members of a primary group is spontaneous in nature whereas the relationship among the members of a secondary group is governed by external forces.

**(12)** Primary relationship is all inclusive. Here each member knows each other personally and they are concerned with the total aspect of human being. But secondary relationship is not all inclusive. Here members do not know each other personally and they are not concerned with the total aspect of life of members.

**EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF GROUP DYNAMICS**

Dynamics mean change and group dynamics means the change of behaviour through interaction in the group. As we know that students live in groups in school as their classroom, group of playmates, hobby club, science club, library etc.

It is natural that students interact with each other in groups to perform their needs, get information's, provide messages etc. As we know that human behaviour is not static, so when students interact in their group/groups with other members then the behaviour of members who constantly, interact, undergoes continuous changes. This kind of changing in behaviour of students due to their interaction in group with group members is called group dynamics.

We see that when teacher organize any group project work in classroom regarding any topic, then he/she formulates various groups and provide them project work/works. Students have to interact with the members of their group to perform various works of project, to get information, to seek help, etc.

Every group demands reciprocity among its members. Every group influences, to a great extent, the behaviour of its members. Students interact with the environment for their development. This development depends on social interaction. A teacher should study group dynamics to deal with various groups of students.

**Now we shall discuss, how study of group dynamics is helpful in teaching learning process-**

**1. To provide appropriate guidance to students for their adjustment:**

If teacher has basic knowledge of group dynamics then he/she can provide appropriate guidance to his/her students for their adjustment. As we know that education aims to make socially adjustable citizen of the country, we want that our students should have positive adjustment with their friends, classmates, playmates and others.

Sometimes students can face certain problems regarding their process of adjustment. If teacher is well-equipped with the basic knowledge of group dynamics, if teacher knows how a student should interact with other members of his/her group positively then he/she (teacher) can provide proper guidance to students about their adjustment.

**2. To improve the emotional and social climate of the class:**

As we know that we can not even imagine organising participative, effective and armful teaching-learning process in the class which does not have proper emotional and social climate.

If the students of the class have negative attitudes about each other, if they act unsociably as enemies, if they do not care emotions, needs, expectations of others then we cannot expect a successful transaction of teaching-learning process in that kind of class.

Through the study of group dynamics, a teacher can guide his/her students for making proper adjustment and healthy interaction with each other. Teacher can improve the emotional and social climate of the class.

**3. To improve group relations in the class:**

We can see some particular patterns of relationship among the students of the class as-stars, isolates, mutual pairs, chains etc. If teacher has basic knowledge of group dynamics then he/she can provide a leadership role. The role of the leader is now shifting from authoritarian to a democratic and participatory one.

Teacher should try to encourage participation of students in all the school activities. If teacher has studied about group dynamics, then he/she can improve the climate of the students of his class by taking them into confidence.

Teacher can take his/her decisions democratically. By studying group dynamics, he/she can motivate students to participate in learning activities. Since group relation has an important role in teaching-learning process so a teacher should improve group relation in the class. For this improvement he/she should have knowledge of group dynamics.

**4. To deal effectively with social groups:**

Teacher has to organise various activities in various groups. To deal efficiently with social groups in classroom, in playground, in laboratory, in co-curricular activities, teacher should have study about group dynamics.

**5. To have a thorough knowledge of the interaction process:**

As we know that in a class we cannot find all the students of same qualities, needs, interests etc. They may be of different socio-economic background.

Teacher should try to ascertain positive interaction among these students. For this teacher should have a complete knowledge of group dynamics and the interaction process.

**6. To remove conflicts and stresses in the group:**

As we know that conflicts and stresses in the group, disturb the learning climate of the class. A teacher should try to remove these. For this a teacher should have study the group dynamic process.

As a whole, a teacher's work is not only to teach the students but him/her should work to create positive circumstances in the class which could motivate students towards participative and armful learns. For this kind of creation a teacher should have thorough knowledge of group dynamics which help a teacher in classroom transaction.