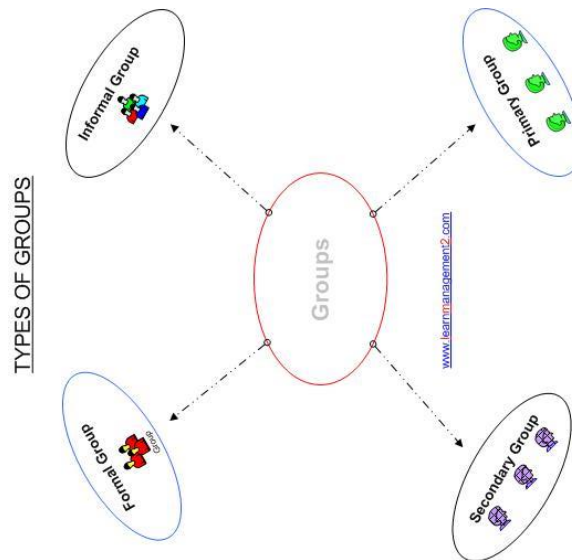


**Meaning of Group:** A group can be defined as several individuals who come together to accomplish a particular task or goal. Group dynamics refers to the attitudinal and behavioral characteristics of a group. Group dynamics concern how groups form, their structure and process, and how they function. Group dynamics are relevant in both formal and informal groups of all types. In an organizational setting, groups are a very common organizational entity and the study of groups and group dynamics is an important area of study in organizational behaviour.

## TYPES OF GROUP

Within many organisations different groups are formed at different levels, formal groups, informal groups, primary groups and secondary groups. Some groups maybe deliberately formed, some groups are formed through an informal setting. Below we discuss briefly four forms of groups which are found within a company.



### Formal Group

A formal group is created within an organisation to complete a specific role or task. This may be a one off objective such as the launch of a particular product or service or a permanent/ongoing objective such as the provision of Information Technology (IT).

### Informal Group

Informal groups are established by individuals who decide they want to interact with each other. Informal groups usually do not have a specific purpose; often the group forms because the group members regularly happen to be in the same location or because they enjoy each other's company. For example people may form a group because they sit close together in an office or live together in a house.

### Primary Group

A primary group is made up of a small group of people who interact regularly. A small team with a leader is an example of a primary group. A family can also be called a primary group. Within the primary group, values, beliefs and culture are all very important.

### Secondary Group

When a large number of people get together (who do not normally get together) it is called a secondary group. Secondary group members do not get the opportunity to get to know each other as well as primary group members because the interaction with each other is less than in a primary group. When a secondary group is formed, individuals

usually have their own agenda and goals. The relationship they form is not long term and social interaction within a secondary group is likely to be low.

## **GROUP COHESIVENESS.**

Cohesiveness refers to the bonding of group members and their desire to remain part of the group. Many factors influence the amount of group cohesiveness. Generally speaking, the more difficult it is to obtain group membership the more cohesive the group. Groups also tend to become cohesive when they are in intense competition with other groups or face a serious external threat to survival. Smaller groups and those who spend considerable time together also tend to be more cohesive.

Cohesiveness in work groups has many positive effects, including worker satisfaction, low turnover and absenteeism, and higher productivity. However, highly cohesive groups may be detrimental to organizational performance if their goals are misaligned with organizational goals. Highly cohesive groups may also be more vulnerable to groupthink. Groupthink occurs when members of a group exert pressure on each other to come to a consensus in decision making. Groupthink results in careless judgments, unrealistic appraisals of alternative courses of action, and a lack of reality testing. It can lead to a number of decision-making issues such as the following:

1. Incomplete assessments of the problem,
2. Incomplete information search,
3. Bias in processing information,
4. Inadequate development of alternatives, and
5. Failure to examine the risks of the preferred choice.

Evidence suggests that groups typically outperform individuals when the tasks involved require a variety of skills, experience, and decision making. Groups are often more flexible and can quickly assemble, achieve goals, and disband or move on to another set of objectives. Many organizations have found that groups have many motivational aspects as well. Group members are more likely to participate in decision-making and problem-solving activities leading to **empowerment** and increased productivity. Groups complete most of the work in an organization; thus, the effectiveness of the organization is limited by the effectiveness of its groups.

## **Group Dynamics: it's characteristics, stages, types, factors ,team building and other Details!**

People may underestimate the importance of society and group memberships on their lives. Whilst people sometimes undertake solo journeys yet by and large much of our experiences of life involves being engaged with others and groups.

Within an organization we do find number of groups. Individuals joining group (s) is a reality – may be formal or informal groups. People work in groups quite frequently and in many different areas of their life e.g. at work, school/college, sport, hobbies. The managers need to understand Group Dynamics that can enable managers to adopt the right approach of interacting with them.

### **What is Group Dynamics?**

Group dynamics deals with the attitudes and behavioral patterns of a group. Group dynamics concern how groups are formed, what is their structure and which processes are followed in their functioning. Thus, it is concerned with the interactions and forces operating between groups.

Group dynamics is relevant to groups of all kinds – both formal and informal. If the UPA government has set up Group of Ministers for every governance issue, the Supreme Court of India has 27 Group of Judges committees overseeing all manner of non-judicial work in the apex court. In an organizational setting, the term groups are a very common and the study of groups and group dynamics is an important area of study.

### **What is A Group?**

Every organization is a group unto itself. A group refers to two or more people who share a common meaning and evaluation of themselves and come together to achieve common goals. In other words, a group is a collection of people who interact with one another; accept rights and obligations as members and who share a common identity.

### ***Characteristics of a Group:***

**Regardless of the size or the purpose, every group has similar characteristics:**

- (a) 2 or more persons (if it is one person, it is not a group)
- (b) Formal social structure (the rules of the game are defined)
- (c) Common fate (they will swim together)
- (d) Common goals (the destiny is the same and emotionally connected)
- (e) Face-to-face interaction (they will talk with each other)
- (f) Interdependence (each one is complimentary to the other)
- (g) Self-definition as group members (what one is who belongs to the group)
- (h) Recognition by others (yes, you belong to the group).

### **Process/Stages of Group Development/Evolution:**

Group Development is a dynamic process. How do groups evolve? There is a process of five stages through which groups pass through. The process includes the five stages: forming, storming, forming, performing, and adjourning.

#### ***Forming:***

The first stage in the life of a group is concerned with forming a group. This stage is characterized by members seeking either a work assignment (in a formal group) or other benefit, like status, affiliation, power, etc. (in an informal group). Members at this stage either engage in busy type of activity or show apathy.

#### ***Storming:***

The next stage in this group is marked by the formation of dyads and triads. Members seek out familiar or similar individuals and begin a deeper sharing of self. Continued attention to the subgroup creates a differentiation in the group and tensions across the dyads / triads may appear. Pairing is a common phenomenon. There will be conflict about controlling the group.

#### ***Norming:***

The third stage of group development is marked by a more serious concern about task performance. The dyads/triads begin to open up and seek out other members in the group. Efforts are made to establish various norms for task performance.

Members begin to take greater responsibility for their own group and relationship while the authority figure becomes relaxed. Once this stage is complete, a clear picture will emerge about hierarchy of leadership. The norming stage is over with the solidification of the group structure and a sense of group identity and camaraderie.

#### ***Performing:***

This is a stage of a fully functional group where members see themselves as a group and get involved in the task. Each person makes a contribution and the authority figure is also seen as a part of the group. Group norms are followed and collective pressure is exerted to ensure the Process of Group effectiveness of the group. The group may redefine its goals

Development in the light of information from the outside environment and show an autonomous will to pursue those

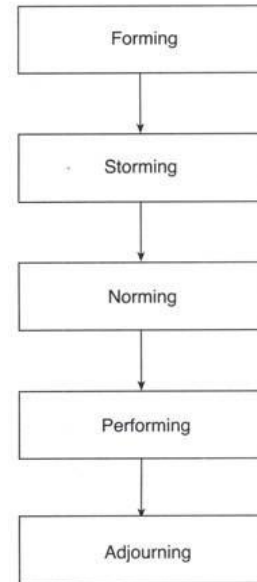


Figure 12.1 : Process of Group Development

goals. The long-term viability of the group is established and nurtured.

### ***Adjourning:***

In the case of temporary groups, like project team, task force, or any other such group, which have a limited task at hand, also have a fifth stage, This is known as adjourning.

The group decides to disband. Some members may feel happy over the performance, and some may be unhappy over the stoppage of meeting with group members. Adjourning may also be referred to as mourning, i.e. mourning the adjournment of the group.

The readers must note that the four stages of group development mentioned above for permanent groups are merely suggestive. In reality, several stages may go on simultaneously.

### **Types of Groups:**

One way to classify the groups is by way of formality – formal and informal. While formal groups are established by an organization to achieve its goals, informal groups merge spontaneously. Formal groups may take the form of command groups, task groups, and functional groups.

#### ***1. Command Groups:***

Command groups are specified by the organizational chart and often consist of a supervisor and the subordinates that report to that supervisor. An example of a command group is a market research firm CEO and the research associates under him.

#### ***2. Task Groups:***

Task groups consist of people who work together to achieve a common task. Members are brought together to accomplish a narrow range of goals within a specified time period. Task groups are also commonly referred to as task forces. The organization appoints members and assigns the goals and tasks to be accomplished.

Examples of assigned tasks are the development of a new product, the improvement of a production process, or designing the syllabus under semester system.

Other common task groups are ad hoc committees, project groups, and standing committees. Ad hoc committees are temporary groups created to resolve a specific complaint or develop a process are normally disbanded after the group completes the assigned task.

### 3. Functional Groups:

A functional group is created by the organization to accomplish specific goals within an unspecified time frame. Functional groups remain in existence after achievement of current goals and objectives. Examples of functional groups would be a marketing department, a customer service department, or an accounting department.

In contrast to formal groups, informal groups are formed naturally and in response to the common interests and shared values of individuals. They are created for purposes other than the accomplishment of organizational goals and do not have a specified time frame. Informal groups are not appointed by the organization and members can invite others to join from time to time.

Informal groups can have a strong influence in organizations that can either be positive or negative. For example, employees who form an informal group can either discuss how to improve a production process or how to create shortcuts that jeopardize quality. Informal groups can take the form of interest groups, friendship groups, or reference groups.

#### i. Interest Group:

Interest groups usually continue over time and may last longer than general informal groups. Members of interest groups may not be part of the same organizational department but they are bound together by some other common interest.

The goals and objectives of group interests are specific to each group and may not be related to organizational goals and objectives. An example of an interest group would be students who come together to form a study group for a specific class.

#### ii. Friendship Groups:

Friendship groups are formed by members who enjoy similar social activities, political beliefs, religious values, or other common bonds. Members enjoy each other's company and often meet after work to participate in these activities. For example, a group of employees who form a friendship group may have a yoga group, a Rajasthani association in Delhi, or a kitty party lunch once a month.

#### iii. Reference Groups:

A reference group is a type of group that people use to evaluate themselves. The main objectives of reference groups are to seek social validation and social comparison. Social validation allows individuals to justify their attitudes and values while social comparison helps individuals evaluate their own actions by comparing themselves to others. Reference groups have a strong influence on members' behavior. Such groups are formed voluntarily. Family, friends, and religious affiliations are strong reference groups for most individuals.

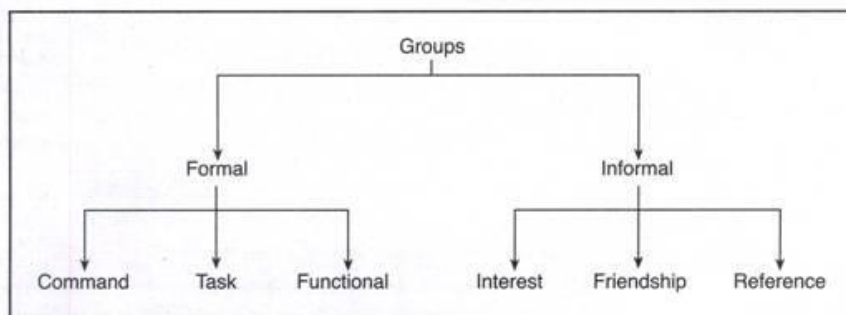


Figure 12.2 : Types of Groups

### Factors Affecting Group Behaviour:

The success or failure of a group depends upon so many factors. Group member resources, structure (group size, group roles, group norms, and group cohesiveness), group processes (the communication, group decision making processes, power dynamics, conflicting interactions, etc.) and group tasks (complexity and interdependence).

#### 1. Group Member Resources:

The members' knowledge, abilities, skills; and personality characteristics (sociability, self-reliance, and independence) are the resources the group members bring in with them. The success depends upon these resources as useful to the task.

## 2. Group Structure:

### Group Size:

Group size can vary from 2 people to a very large number of people. Small groups of two to ten are thought to be more effective because each member has ample opportunity to take part and engage actively in the group. Large groups may waste time by deciding on processes and trying to decide who should participate next.

Evidence supports the notion that as the size of the group increases, satisfaction increases up to a certain point. Increasing the size of a group beyond 10-12 members' results in decreased satisfaction. It is increasingly difficult for members of large groups to identify with one another and experience cohesion.

### Group Roles:

In formal groups, roles are always predetermined and assigned to members. Each role shall have specific responsibilities and duties. There are, however, emergent roles that develop naturally to meet the needs of the groups.

These emergent roles will often substitute the assigned roles as individuals begin to express themselves and become more assertive. Group roles can then be classified into work roles, maintenance roles, and blocking roles.

Work roles are task-oriented activities that involve accomplishing the group's goals. They involve a variety of specific roles such as initiator, informer, clarifier, summarizer, and reality tester.

Maintenance roles are social-emotional activities that help members maintain their involvement in the group and raise their personal commitment to the group. The maintenance roles are harmonizer, gatekeeper, consensus tester, encourager, and compromiser.

**Table 12.1 Roles within Group(s)**

Initiator	Takes initiative in defining problems, proposing action, and suggesting procedures.
Informer	Finding facts and giving advice or opinions.
Interpreter	Interprets ideas, define terms, and clarify issues.
Summarizer	Restates suggestions, offers decisions, and comes to conclusions.
Reality Taster	Analyzes ideas and tests the ideas in real situations.
Harmoniser	Reduces tension in the group, reconciles differences, and explores opportunities.
Gatekeeper	Keeps communication channels open and makes suggestions that encourage participation.
Consensus tester	Asks if the group is nearing a decision and tests possible conclusions.
Encourager	Being friendly, warm, and responsive to other group members.
Compromiser	Modifies decisions, offers compromises, and admits errors.
Aggressor	Criticizes members' values and makes jokes in a sarcastic, derogatory, or semi-concealed manner.
Blocker	Stubbornly resists the group's ideas, disagrees with group members for personal reasons.
Dominator	Controls conversations by patronizing others.
Comedian	Attention-getters in ways not relevant to group's objectives.
Avoidance Behaviour	Pursuing goals not related to the group and changing the subject to avoid commitment to the group.

Blocking roles are activities that disrupt the group. Blockers will stubbornly resist the group's ideas, disagree with group members for personal reasons, and will have hidden agendas. They may take the form of dominating discussions, verbally attacking other group members, and distracting the group with trivial information or unnecessary humour.

Often times the blocking behaviour may not be intended as negative. Sometimes a member may share a joke in order to break the tension, or may question a decision in order to force group members to rethink the issue. The blocking roles are aggressor, blocker, dominator, comedian, and avoidance behaviour.

Role conflicts arise when there is ambiguity (confusion about delegation and no specific job descriptions) between the sent role and the received role which leads to frustration and dissatisfaction, ultimately leading to turnover; inconsistency between the perceived role and role behaviour (conflict between work roles and family roles); and conflicting demands from different sources while performing the task.

### **Group Norms:**

Norms define the acceptable standard or boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, shared by group members. They are typically created in order to facilitate group survival, make behaviour more predictable, avoid embarrassing situations, and express the values of the group.

Each group will create its own norms that might determine from the work performance to dress to making comments in a meeting. Groups exert pressure on members to force them to conform to the group's standards and at times not to perform at higher levels. The norms often reflect the level of commitment, motivation, and performance of the group.

The majority of the group must agree that the norms are appropriate in order for the behaviour to be accepted. There must also be a shared understanding that the group supports the norms. It should be noted, however, that members might violate group norms from time to time.

If the majority of members do not adhere to the norms, then they will eventually change and will no longer serve as a standard for evaluating behaviour. Group members who do not conform to the norms will be punished by being excluded, ignored, or asked to leave the group.

### **Group Cohesiveness:**

Cohesiveness refers to the bonding of group members or unity, feelings of attraction for each other and desire to remain part of the group. Many factors influence the amount of group cohesiveness – agreement on group goals, frequency of interaction, personal attractiveness, inter-group competition, favourable evaluation, etc.

The more difficult it is to obtain group membership the more cohesive the group will be. Groups also tend to become cohesive when they are in intense competition with other groups or face a serious external threat to survival. Smaller groups and those who spend considerable time together also tend to be more cohesive.

Cohesiveness in work groups has many positive effects, including worker satisfaction, low turnover and absenteeism, and higher productivity. However, highly cohesive groups may be detrimental to organizational performance if their goals are misaligned with organizational goals.

Highly cohesive groups may also be more vulnerable to groupthink. Groupthink occurs when members of a group exert pressure on each other to come to a consensus in decision making. Groupthink results in careless judgments, unrealistic appraisals of alternative courses of action, and a lack of reality testing.

Evidence suggests that groups typically outperform individuals when the tasks involved require a variety of skills, experience, and decision making. Groups are often more flexible and can quickly assemble, achieve goals, and disband or move on to another set of objectives.

Many organizations have found that groups have many motivational aspects as well. Group members are more likely to participate in decision-making and problem-solving activities leading to empowerment and increased productivity. Groups complete most of the work in an organization; thus, the effectiveness of the organization is limited by the effectiveness of its groups.

**Table 12.2: Dysfunctions of a Group**

Norms' violation and Role Ambiguity	Role ambiguity and role conflict lead to achieving group goals rather than the organisational goals.
Groupthink and conformity Problem	Illusion that they can do no wrong, illusion that group is in agreement, Seeks consensus and ignore/suppress alternative ideas
Social Loafing	Members reduce their performance levels

**3. Group Processes:**

Decision-making by a group is superior, because group generates more information and knowledge, generates diverse alternatives, increases acceptance of a solution, and increases legitimacy. But it is also true, that decision making is like 'munde munde matirbhinna'.

Decisions take longer time, minority is dominated, pressure is applied to conform to group decisions, and none is responsible for the decisions. Group processes also include communication, conflict management, and leadership that we shall discuss in details in the chapters to follow hereafter.

**Turning Groups into Effective Teams:**

All teams are groups but not all groups are teams. Teams often are difficult to form because it takes time for members to learn how to work together. People in every workplace talk about building the team, working as a team, and my team, but few understand how to create the experience of team work or how to develop an effective team. Belonging to a team, in the broadest sense, is a result of feeling part of something larger than oneself. It has a lot to do with your understanding of the mission or objectives of your organization.

In a team-oriented environment, one contributes to the overall success of the organization. One works with fellow members of the organization to produce these results. Even though you have a specific job function and you belong to a specific department, you are unified with other organization members to accomplish the overall objectives. The bigger picture drives your actions; your function exists to serve the bigger picture.

It is on record that teams are better than groups, because they are more flexible and responsive to dynamic environment. A work group has no opportunity to involve in collective works. It is the work team whose members 'work intensely on a specific, common goal using their positive synergy, individual and mutual accountability, and complementary skills'.

**Table 12.3: Difference between a Group and a Team**

<i>Groupa</i>	<i>Team</i>
No opportunity to engage in collective work, which requires joint effort.	Members work intensely with individual and mutual accountability and complementary skills.
No positive synergy to create.	Generates positive synergy due to capability of group members to bounce ideas off one another to correct one another's mistakes, to bring a diverse knowledge base to bear on a problem, and to accomplish work that is too vast for any one individual to achieve.
Performance not greater than the sum of inputs	Generates greater outputs with no increase in inputs
Less responsive to dynamic environment	More flexible and more responsive to dynamic environment

Team-building helps to increase intra-group and inter-group effectiveness to bring members together, make them share their perception of each other and understand each other's point of view.

Thus, resolve problems and work together in a cooperative and collaborative mode. Teams can be of four types – problem-solving teams (only making suggestion), self-managed, teams (operate without a manager), cross-functional teams (a group of experts from different specialities), and virtual team (members collaborate online). In terms of size,



teams may be institutional (comprising of hundreds of members) and operational (a small, cooperative group, in regular contact and contributes responsibly to achieve task at hand).

### **Eight Cs for Team Building:**

To show business results and profitability, ways are explored by the executives to improve their productivity.

**Successful team building, that creates effective, focused work teams, requires attention to each of the following:**

#### **1. Clear Expectations:**

The managers must clearly tell the team members of the expected performance and the team members must understand the reason for its creation. For it the organization must support the team with resources of people, time and money.

#### **2. Commitment:**

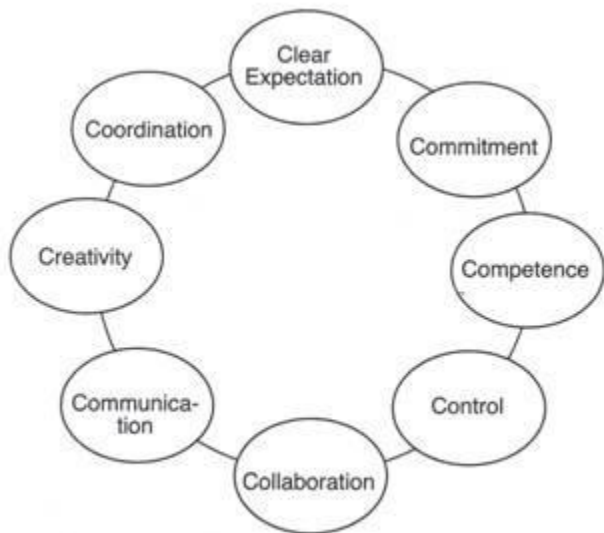
Team members must participate in the team, feel that the team mission is important, and show commitment to accomplishing the team mission and expected outcomes. Commitment will come if team members perceive their service as valuable to the organization and to their own careers.

#### **3. Competence:**

Team members must have the knowledge, skill and capabilities, the resources, strategies and support needed to accomplish its mission to address the issues for which the team was formed.

#### **4. Control:**

The team must have not only enough freedom and empowerment to feel the ownership necessary to accomplish its charter, but also the accountability. There has to be a defined review process.



**Figure 12.3: Effective Team**

#### **5. Collaboration:**

The team should understand group processes and work effectively and cooperatively with other members of the team. For it they have to understand the roles and responsibilities of team members, team leaders, and team recorders.

#### **6. Communication:**

To make team members clear about the priority of their tasks, and receive regular feedback, team members must clearly and honestly with each other. Diverse opinions be welcome and conflicts be taken up positively.

#### **7. Creativity:**

The team should value creative thinking, unique solutions, and new ideas; and reward members who take reasonable risks to make improvements. If necessary, it should provide the training, education, access to books and films, and field trips to stimulate new thinking.

The creative development of new products, new technologies, new services, or new organizational structures is possible because teams may have variety of skills needed for successful innovation.

Team members can uncover each other's flaws and balance each other's strengths and weaknesses. Managers should empower the team and make it accountable for the innovation process.

### **8. Coordination:**

Teams should understand the concept of internal customer to whom they provide a product or a service. Team efforts need to be coordinated by a central leadership team that assists the groups to obtain what they need for success.

The cross- functional and multi-department teams must work together effectively. The organization should develop a customer-focused and process-focused orientation and move away from traditional departmental thinking.

Spend time and attention on each of these eight tips to ensure your work teams contribute most effectively to your business success. Your team members would love you, your business will see new heights, and empowered people will "own" and be responsible to their work processes

### **Informal Group:**

In every organisation along with formal groups there exists informal groups which emerge naturally due to the response and common interests of the members who can easily identify with the goals or independent activities of the informal groups.

Sometimes the efforts may be driven by a common goal that may compliment or work against the goals of the formal group. An informal group can be defined as a group that evolves spontaneously, not shown in the organization's structure, with the objective of fulfilling personal and social need of its members.

### **Informal Group Vs Informal Organisation:**

An informal group is a voluntary group of people casually acquainted with each other for their own personal fulfillment because they have some common and shared backgrounds, characteristics and concerns (values / interests / hobbies / friendship).

Whilst it is easy to differentiate between a formal group and a formal organisation, the differences between informal group and informal organisation tend to be difficult. The difference between informal organization and informal group is that informal organisation is a larger entity consisting of all informal groups in an organization.

Informal Organisation= Sigma Informal Groups:

An informal group is the nucleus of informal organization. When an informal group adopts a formally defined structure and group processes, it no longer remains an informal group.

### **Informal Group vs. Formal Group:**

The two are different in very many ways.

**Table 12. : Difference between formal and Informal Groups**

<i>Basis</i>	<i>Formal Group</i>	<i>Informal Group</i>
Formation	Legally constituted, rationally designed, and consciously planned	Emerges naturally and spontaneously
Existence	Normally formal group does not arise because of informal Group	Informal group emerges while working in a Formal Group
Purpose	Well-defined and centres around survival, growth, profit, Service to Society	Ill-defined and centres around friendship, goodwill, unity and so on
Relationship	Superior-subordinate relationship	Personal and social relationship
Influenced by	Rationality and leaves no scope for personal, social, and emotional factors	Personal, social, and emotional factors
Communication	Unity of Command and line of authority followed	Pattern is grapevine, which is natural, haphazard and intricate
Leadership	Based on formal authority and position	Based on individual competence and group acceptance
Boundaries	Operates within set boundaries	No bounds, operates in different directions
Nature & Emphasis	Normative and idealistic, emphasis on efficiency, discipline, conformity, consistency and control bring in rigidity and bureaucracy in processes and practices	Reflects actual functioning, characterised by relative freedom, spontaneity, homeliness and warmth

***Characteristics of Informal Groups:*****1. Creation:**

It is not created by the organisation but springs up spontaneously.

**2. Satisfaction of Needs:**

The needs which cannot be satisfied within the framework of formal organisation, like social and psychological needs of people, such people create informal groups.

**3. Voluntary Membership:**

Nobody is compelled to join an informal organization.

**4. Multi-Group Membership:**

A member of an informal group can be a member of more than one informal group to pursue different interests.

**5. Systems and Processes:**

Members of such groups follow their own norms, leadership, communication, etc. to remain cohesive. The communication channels are referred to as 'Grapevine'. Grapevine i.e., informal channel runs very fast to spread the information across the organization.

**6. Leadership:**

Every informal group has a leader, selected by the group, and who is capable of helping to realize their goals. The moment it is realized that the leader is incapable, (s) he is replaced with a new leader.

***Reasons for the Emergence of Informal Groups:***

1. People working together may come together.
2. People with similar values, beliefs, attitudes, and interests often feel attraction to come together.

3. Need satisfaction – to belong, to associate, etc.

4. Removal of monotony of routine tasks – to get rid of monotony and psychological fatigue, job-related boredom and frustration provides an opportunity to behave in a natural and relaxed manner.

5. Promotion of other interests and pursuit of goals – People join Rotary or Lions Club to expand their contacts which may help them to satisfy their personal goals.

### ***Benefits of Informal Groups:***

#### **The benefits of an informal group are as follows:**

1. Blending with formal group allows people to work for the formal organisation.
2. Informal work group lightens the workload for the formal manager.
3. Brings satisfaction and stability to the organisation as a whole.
4. Provides a useful channel of communication.
5. Encourages managers to plan and act more carefully.

### ***Limitations of Informal Groups:***

#### **The limitations are as follows:**

1. Resistance to Change because they do not want to deviate from existing norms and learn new ways.
2. Informal group provides most fertile ground for Rumour Mongering because of maliciousness, lack of proper communication systems and processes and ambiguous circumstances.
3. Since a member of an informal group is also a member of a formal group, at times it creates role conflict.
4. Creativity of group member (s) is restricted because of strong pressure for conformity applied by the group.

## **Understanding Interpersonal Behavior in Organisation**

### **Definition:**

When people interact in organisations, there is a social transaction in which one person responds to another. ERIC BERNE is usually credited with starting the transactional movement for psychotherapy in the 1950s. He observed in his patients that often it was as if several different people were inside each person. He also observed that these various selves transmitted with people in different way.

In the words of Eric Berne, “The unit of social intercourse is called a transaction. If two or more people encounter each other in a social aggregation, sooner or later one of them will speak or give some other indication of acknowledging the presence of the other. This is called the transactional stimulus. Another person will then say or do something which is in some way related to this stimulus and that is called the transactional response.”

### **A few definitions of transactional analysis are as given below:**

“Transactional analysis (TA) is a technique used to help people better understand their own and other’s behaviour, especially in interpersonal relationships.”

“TA refers to a method of analyzing and understanding interpersonal behaviour. TA offers a model of personality and the dynamics of self and its relationship to others that makes possible a clear and meaningful discussion of behaviour.”

After Eric Berne, this concept was made popular by Thomas A. Harris, Muriel James and Dorothy Jongeward and Abe Wagner. In later years Jongeward and Wagner have shown how the concepts of TA can be applied to organisations for

analyzing interpersonal communication and related to the work of other theories such as Douglas McGregor and Rensis Likert.

**TA is primarily concerned with the following:**

- (i) Analysis of Self Awareness
- (ii) Analysis of Ego states
- (iii) Analysis of Transactions
- (iv) Script analysis
- (v) Games analysis
- (vi) Analysis of life positions
- (vii) Stroking

**Analysis of Self Awareness:**

The interpersonal relationships are composed of inter-self. Self is the core of personality pattern which provides integration. This relationship can be studied properly if a person can perceive his own behavioural style and at the same time how it is perceived by others. Self awareness is a cognitive concept; it describes the self in terms of image, both conscious and unconscious. Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham have developed a diagram to look at one's personality including behaviours and attitudes that can be known and unknown to self and known and unknown to others. They named this diagram the Johari window.

**This Johari window comprising of four quadrants is shown in the following diagram.**

**1. The Open Self:**

The open quadrant refers to the behaviours, feelings and motivations of an individual which are known to self and also known to others in any specific organisational setting. Some individuals are straight forward, open and sharing. He himself is very clear about what he is doing, what he is feeling and what his motivations are. Similarly others are also very clear about his actions, feelings and motivations. In such type of interpersonal relationship, chances of conflict, if any, will be very little.

**2. The Blind Self:**

The blind self quadrant is unknown to self but known to others. Other people know what is happening to a person, but he himself is unaware of it. Very often such blind behaviour is copied by individuals from certain significant people unconsciously right since the childhood.

Since such a behaviour is copied unconsciously, people may not be aware of it. Another reason for this unawareness is that other people are not willing to be open and do not give relevant feed back to the person concerned. Even if there is a verbal or non-verbal response in the system, the individual may not be in a position to perceive it. There are chances of interpersonal conflict in this situation.

Jongeward and Seyer observes that, "Subtle bars to our personal effectiveness are often our blind quadrant. We may speak in a certain way with a tone of voice, a look on our face-a gesture-that we are blind to, but other people are acutely aware of it. In fact, our manner can affect how they perceive us and they believe they can interact with us."

**3. The Hidden Self:**

The hidden self is the quadrant which is known to self but not known to others. This is a very private and personal window because only the person concerned knows what is happening. The individual is aware about the hidden self but does not want to share it with others. People learn to hide their feeling and ideas right from the childhood. Other people

in the system are unable to perceive the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of the person in quadrant. Like blind self, chances of interpersonal conflict are there in this situation.

#### **4. The Unknown Self:**

This quadrant is unknown to self and unknown to others. The unknown self is mysterious in nature. Sometimes feelings and motivation go so deep that no one including the person concerned knows about them. In Freudian Psychology, this would be called the subconscious or unconscious. Many times only a small portion of motivation is clearly visible or conscious to oneself. People experience unknown parts of life in dreams or deep rooted fears or compulsions. In such situations, misunderstanding and interpersonal conflict is almost sure to result.

#### **Principles of Change in Awareness:**

The awareness about self keeps on changing continuously. As the awareness changes, the quadrant to which the psychological state is assigned also changes.

#### **According to Jongeward, there are eleven principles of such change:**

1. Any change in one quadrant will affect the other quadrants also.
2. It takes energy to hide, deny or be blind to behaviour which is involved in interaction.
3. Threat tends to decrease awareness whereas mutual trust tends to increase awareness.
4. Forced awareness is undesirable and usually ineffective.
5. Interpersonal learning means that a change has taken place so that one quadrant is larger and any one of the other quadrants has grown smaller.
6. Working with others is facilitated by a large enough area of free activity. It means more of the resources and skill of the persons involved can be applied to the task at hand.
7. The smaller the first quadrant, poorer will be the communication.
8. There is universal curiosity about the hidden area, but this is held in check by custom, social training and diverse fears.
9. Sensitivity means appreciating the covert aspects of behaviour in quadrants 2, 3 and 4 and respecting the desire of others to keep them so.
10. Learning about group processes, as they are being experienced helps to increase awareness (enlarging quadrant) for the group as a whole as well as for individual members.
11. The value system of a group and its members may be observed in the way the group deals with unknowns in the life of the group and of self.

The process that affects the shape of the Johari window is the feedback. This is the extent to which others are willing to share with the person on how he or she is coming across. It is also the extent to which the person is able to perceive the verbal and non verbal feedback in the organisational setting.

#### **Conflict Management : Characteristics, Types, Stages, Causes and other Details**

Conflicts are natural in all walks of daily life – both at workplace and home. Thus, conflict is ever present and both charming and maddening. But conflict is a complex and big subject. There are many sources of conflict. Conflict occurs when individuals or groups are not obtaining what they need or want and are seeking their own self-interest.

Sometimes the individual is not aware of the need and unconsciously starts to act out. Other times, the individual is very aware of what he or she wants and actively works at achieving the goal. It would be better to identify conflict at an early stage and come to an understanding.

The concept of conflict is controversial. Psychologists and sociologists have given different meanings. It is being defined as a process by few, an obstructive behavior, and goal incompatibility by others. Conflict can be expressed as:

Conflict is a process, where perception (real or otherwise) leads to disruption of desirable state of harmony and stability in an interdependent world.

### **Characteristics of Conflict:**

#### ***1. Conflict is a Process:***

Conflict occurs in 'layers'. First layer is always misunderstanding. The other layers are differences of values, differences of viewpoint, differences of interest, and interpersonal differences. It is also called a process because it begins with one party perceiving the other to oppose or negatively affect its interests and ends with competing, collaborating, compromising or avoiding.

#### ***2. Conflict is Inevitable:***

Conflict exists everywhere. No two persons are the same. Hence they may have individual differences. And the differences may be because of values or otherwise, lead to conflict. Although inevitable, conflict can be minimized, diverted and/or resolved. Conflict develops because we are dealing with people's lives, jobs, children, pride, self-concept, ego and sense of mission. Conflict is inevitable and often good, for example, good teams always go through a "form, storm, norm and perform" period.

#### ***3. Conflict is a Normal Part of Life:***

Individuals, groups, and organisations have unlimited needs and different values but limited resources. Thus, this incompatibility is bound to lead to conflicts. The conflict is not a problem, but if it is poorly managed then it becomes a problem.

#### ***4. Perception:***

It must be perceived by the parties to it, otherwise it does not exist. In interpersonal interaction, perception is more important than reality. What we perceive and think affects our behaviour, attitudes, and communication.

#### ***5. Opposition:***

One party to the conflict must be perceiving or doing something the other party does not like or want.

## ***6. Interdependence and Interaction:***

### **ADVERTISEMENTS:**

There must be some kind of real or perceived interdependence. Without interdependence there can be no interaction. Conflict occurs only when some kind of interaction takes place.

## ***7. Everyone is inflicted with Conflict:***

Conflict may occur within an individual, between two or more individuals, groups or between organisations.

## ***8. Conflict is not Unidimensional:***

It comes into different ways in accordance with degree of seriousness and capacity. At times, it may improve even a difficult situation.

### **Concept of Conflict Management:**

‘Conflict management is the principle that all conflicts cannot necessarily be resolved, but learning how to manage conflicts can decrease the odds of non-productive escalation. Conflict management involves acquiring skills related to conflict resolution, self-awareness about conflict modes, conflict communication skills, and establishing a structure for management of conflict in your environment.’ All members of every organisation need to have ways of keeping conflict to a minimum – and of solving problems caused by conflict, before conflict becomes a major obstacle to your work.

### **Types of Conflict:**

**Conflicts can be of different types as described below:**

#### ***On the basis of involvement:***

Conflicts may be intrapersonal (conflict with self), interpersonal (between two persons) and organisational. Organizational conflict, whether real or perceived, is of two types -intraorganizational and interorganizational. Interorganizational conflict occurs between two or more organizations.

Different businesses competing against each other are a good example of interorganizational conflict.

Intraorganizational conflict is the conflict within an organization, and can be examined based upon level (e.g. department, work team, individual), and can be classified as interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup.

Interpersonal conflict-once again-whether it is substantive or affective, refers to conflict between two or more individuals (not representing the group of which they are a part of) of the same or different group at the same or different level, in an organization.



Interpersonal conflict can be divided into intergroup and intragroup conflict. While the former— intragroup—occurs between members of a group (or between subgroups within a group), intergroup—occurs between groups or units in an organization.

***On the basis of Scope:***

Conflicts may be substantive and Affective. A substantive conflict is associated with the job, not individuals, while an affective conflict is drawn from emotions. Substantive conflicts may be over the facts of a situation, the method or means of achieving a solution to the problem, ends or goals, and values. Thus it includes task conflict and process conflict in its scope.

Procedural conflicts can include disagreements about factors such as meeting dates and times, individual task assignments, group organization and leadership, and methods of resolving disagreements. Unresolved procedural conflicts can prevent work on collaborative projects. Substantive conflict can enhance collaborative decision-making. Substantive conflict is also called performance, task, issue, or active conflict.

On the other hand, an affective conflict (also called as relationship or opposite of agreeable conflict) deals with interpersonal relationships or incompatibilities and centres on emotions and frustration between parties.

Affective conflicts can be very destructive to the organisation, if remains unresolved. Relationship conflict comes under the scope of affective conflicts. An affective conflict is nearly always disruptive to collaborative decision-making. The conflict causes members to be negative, irritable, suspicious, and resentful.

For example, when collaborators disagree on the recognition and solution to a task problem because of personal prejudices (e.g. prejudices stemming from strong social, political, economic, racial, religious, ethnic, philosophical, or interpersonal biases) they are seldom able to focus on the task.

The two concepts are related to each other. If one could make a distinction between good and bad conflict, substantive would be good and affective conflict would be bad. Substantive conflict deals with disagreements among group members about the content of the tasks being performed or the performance itself.

***On the basis of Results:***

Conflict can be Constructive or Destructive, creative or restricting, and positive or negative. Destructive conflicts are also known as dysfunctional conflicts, because such conflicts prevent a group from attaining its goals.

Conflict is destructive when it takes attention away from other important activities, undermines morale or self-concept, polarises people and groups, reduces cooperation, increases or sharpens difference, and leads to irresponsible and harmful behaviour, such as fighting, name-calling.

On the other hand, constructive conflicts are also known as functional conflicts, because they support the group goals and help in improving performance. Conflict is constructive when it results in clarification of important problems and issues, results in solutions to problems, involves people in resolving issues important to them, causes authentic communication, helps release emotion, anxiety, and stress, builds cooperation among people through learning more about each other; joining in resolving the conflict, and helps individuals develop understanding and skills.

***On the basis of Sharing by Groups:***

Conflicts may be Distributive and Integrative. Distributive conflict is approached as a distribution of a fixed amount of positive outcomes or resources, where one side will end up winning and the other losing, even if they do win some concessions.

On the other hand, integrative – Groups utilizing the integrative model see conflict as a chance to integrate the needs and concerns of both groups and make the best outcome possible. This type of conflict has a greater emphasis on compromise than the distributive conflict. It has been found that the integrative conflict results in consistently better task related outcomes than the distributive conflict.

***On the basis of Strategy:***

Conflicts may be competitive and cooperative. Competitive conflict is accumulative. The original issue that began the conflict becomes irrelevant. The original issue is more of a pretext than a cause of the conflict. Competitive conflict is marked by the desire to win the fight or argument, even if winning costs more and causes more pain than not fighting at all.

Costs do not matter in competitive conflict, and therefore, irrationality remains its main mark. Competitive conflict is characterized by fear, which is one of the important ingredients in a conflict becoming irrational. If one is personally invested in the outcome, this too leads to irrational conclusions, especially if issues of self-esteem, whether personal or national, are involved.

Competitive conflict can either begin by, or be rationalized by, conflicts of ideology or principle. Even more, when the desire to win overtakes any specific reason for the conflict, irrationally develops.

Importantly in history, when powers are roughly equal, such as the World War I alliances were, conflict that becomes competitive and irrational nearly always develops. In economic competition customers are the winners and the firms may be at risk. But in sports competition is encouraged.

In a cooperative situation the goals are so linked that everybody 'sinks or swims' together, while in the competitive situation if one swims, the other must sink. A cooperative approach aligns with the process of interest-based or integrative bargaining, which leads parties to seek win-win solutions. Disputants that work cooperatively to negotiate a solution are more likely to develop a relationship of trust and come up with mutually beneficial options for settlement.

### ***On the basis of Rights and Interests:***

Conflict of rights means where people are granted certain rights by law or by contract or by previous agreement or by established practice. If such a right is denied, it will lead to conflict. Such a conflict is settled by legal decision or arbitration, not negotiation.

On the other hand conflict of interests means where a person or group demands certain privileges, but there is no law or right in existence. Such a dispute can be settled only through negotiation or collective bargaining.

### **Stages of Conflict:**

A manager must know various stages of conflict to handle it. The solution to conflict becomes easy before it becomes serious, if he knows of the real issue behind the conflict and how the conflict developed. Normally a conflict passes through the following stages:

- a. People recognise lack of resources, diversity of language or culture. Sensitiveness may possibly result in conflict.
- b. If there are serious differences between two or among more than two groups, the latent conflict in a competitive situation may turn out into conflict.
- c. An incident may trigger a latent conflict into an open conflict
- d. Once a problem has been solved, the potential for conflict still remains in the aftermath. In fact the potential is bigger than before, if one party perceives that the resolution has resulted into win-lose situation.

### ***Are Conflicts Bad and Undesirable?***

There are three viewpoints. The traditionalists view conflict as bad and be avoided. In most of the cultures, this is what is being taught – 'If you cannot speak well, keep mum', 'don't fight with anyone', and alike.

The followers of human relations school opine that conflict is natural and can be functional at sometime and dysfunctional at other time. According to them, conflict provides an avenue to know of opinions and an opportunity for creativity and persuasion. Thus, it calls for an open approach to conflict.

The integrationists view conflict as inevitable and stimulating conflict to some extent is helpful. Conflict is viewed as a positive force except that when it is misdiagnosed, mismanaged, or improperly avoided.

We are of the opinion that conflicts are inevitable, not always bad or the same as discomfort, but key to them is proper diagnosis and their resolution. Conflict is often needed as it-

- a. Helps to raise and address problems,
- b. Energizes work to be on the most appropriate issues,
- c. Helps people “be real”, for example, it motivates them to participate, and
- d. Helps people learn how to recognize and benefit from their differences.

Conflict becomes a problem when it:

- a. Hampers productivity,
- b. Lowers morale,
- c. Causes more and continued conflicts, and
- d. Causes inappropriate behaviours.

***Conflict Indicators:***

- a. Body language
- b. Colleagues not speaking to each other or ignoring each other
- c. Deliberately undermining or not co-operating with each other, to the downfall of the team
- d. contradicting and bad-mouthing one another
- e. Disagreements, regardless of issue

- f. Withholding bad news
- g. Surprises
- h. Strong public statements
- i. Airing disagreements through media
- j. Conflicts in value system
- k. Desire for power
- l. Increasing lack of respect
- m. Open disagreement
- n. Lack of candour on budget problems or other sensitive issues
- o. Lack of clear goals
- p. No discussion of progress, failure relative to goals, failure to evaluate the superintendent fairly, thoroughly or at all
- q. Factions meeting to discuss issues separately, when they affect the whole organisation
- r. One group being left out of organising an event which should include everybody
- s. Groups using threatening slogans or symbols to show that their group is right and the others are wrong.

***Causes/ Reasons/Sources of Conflicts:***

**Conflicts may be caused by any one or more of the following reasons:**

**Cognitive (Recognition and Understanding) Dissonance (Difference of opinion):**

It is a conflict between convergent (ability to narrow the number of possible solutions to a problem by applying logic and knowledge) and divergent thinking (thinking outwards instead of inward).

**Status:**

Status is a state, condition, or situation. When there is a need for status and a “wrong” person is promoted.

**Incongruence:**

A party is required to engage in an activity that is incongruent with his or her needs or interests.

**Incompatibility:**

A party holds behavioural preferences like attitudes, values, skills, goals, and perceptions, the satisfaction of which is incompatible with another person's implementation of his or her preferences. Economics: Insufficient remuneration to employees.

**Stress:**

Conflicts from stress from external sources; i.e., functional or dysfunctional situations.

Poor or Inadequate Organisational Structure and Lack of Teamwork.

**Seeking Power:**

Often a conflict for power struggle takes place when everyone wants to be a leader and nobody wants to be a follower.

**Weak Leadership:**

Conflict is bound to result if someone of less stature leads a more qualified and experienced worker.

Arbitrary interpretation and application of rules and policies: Lack of transparency and openness creates dissatisfaction among the affected people.

**Differing viewpoints among colleagues about each other:**

In case of joint action two parties may have partially exclusive behavioural preferences.

**Managerial Actions:**

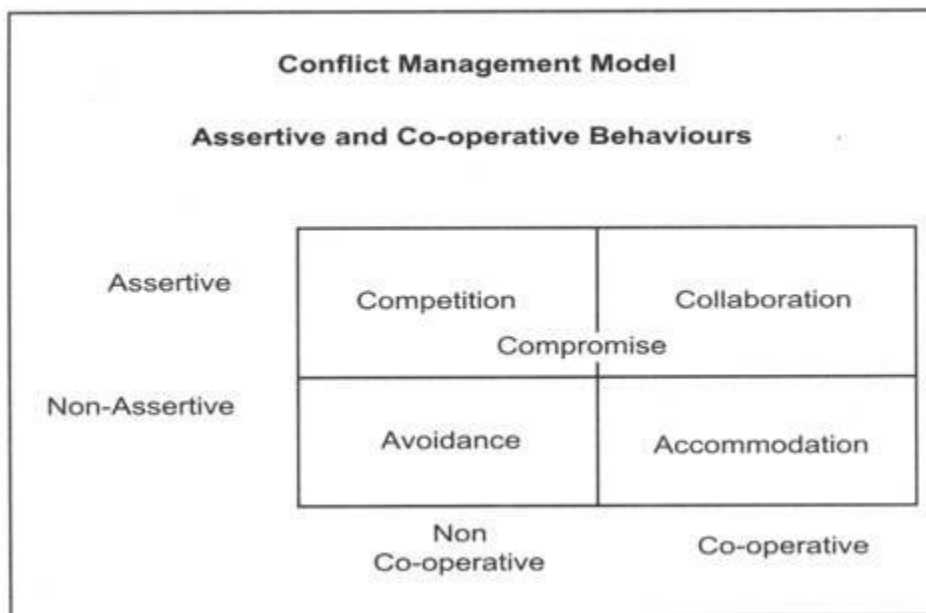
Poor communication (employees being not informed of new decisions, programmes etc., not involved in decision making, and rumor mongering allowed); insufficient resources (Disagreement on allotment of work, stress from inadequate financial, equipment, facilities, and other resources and privileges); absence of personal chemistry between managers and employees (both sides having rigidity, dislike for absence of self- traits); lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities, arbitrariness in employees' performance appraisal; weak leadership, and inconsistent, too-strong, or uninformed leadership (lack of openness, buck-passing with little follow-through, lingering on issues, first-line managers failing to understand their subordinates' jobs). All these factors cause dissatisfaction.

**Conflict Management Styles:**

Conflict management must aim at minimizing affective conflicts at all levels, attain and maintain a moderate amount of substantive conflict, and also to match the status and concerns of the two parties in conflict.

Many styles of conflict management behavior have been researched in the past century. Mary Parker Follett described them as domination, compromise, and integration (involves openness, exchanging information, looking for alternatives, and examining differences to solve the problem in a manner that is acceptable to both parties).

She also mentioned avoidance and suppression as other forms of handling conflicts. Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton then presented five styles: forcing, withdrawing, smoothing, compromising, and problem solving. The five styles in currency in 21st century, as shown in Figure 20.2, are:



**1. Avoidance (Leave-lose/win):**

It is non-assertive and non-cooperative. The manager may think or pretend that no conflict exists or just ignore it. This strategy is used when the effort to resolve is not worth the salt. But this approach over the time worsens the situation.

Avoidance might take the form of diplomatic sidestepping the issue or postponing resolution in time to come or simply withdrawing from a situation. A turtle is a symbol for avoidance, because it can avoid everything by pulling its head and legs into the shell to be off to everything.

**2. Accommodating (Yield-lose/win):**

Accommodating is non-assertive and cooperative, just opposite of competing. To solve the conflict, if someone puts his interests last so as to satisfy concerns of other people by giving in, sacrificing, or accepting, or yielding to other's view point, it is called accommodation.

However, being too accommodating too often can weaken your position to the point where your voice is never heard. There will be high relationship orientation. This style is also used when the new approach is to be used in the very near future. It may solve the conflict for the other party, but a conflict will begin in manager. This style is not objective.

A chameleon is a symbol of the accommodating style since it changes its color to match the color of its environment. By changing its color to accommodate its surroundings, , the chameleon fits quietly into its environment.

### ***3. Competing (Win/lose):***

The style is assertive and non-cooperative. A person puts his/her interests before anyone else's interests. It is also known as dominating style. One stands up for his rights and uses all the power to win his position. There is low relationship orientation. Managers, using this style, want others to follow his dictates or get his way.

This style can be used only when one's leadership is established. There would be low relationship orientation Low relationships orientation a lion can be a symbol of a competitive style. The lion's roar helps the lion to satisfy its interests.

### ***4. Compromising (Mini-win/mini-lose):***

It is some assertive and some cooperative. Compromise is on the path toward collaboration, somewhere between competition and accommodation. The style means mutual give-and-take to satisfy both parties, or both may say, "Something is better than nothing." It has equal distance between competing and accommodating.

There would be negotiated relationship orientation. When the objective is to move on, not to stop the journey, the manager may compromise. A zebra can be a symbol for the compromising style. A zebra's unique look seems to indicate that it didn't care if it was a black horse or a white horse, so it "split the difference" and chose black and white stripes.

### ***5. Collaborating (Win/win):***

It is assertive as well as cooperative, just opposite of avoiding. It may also be called integrative style. This style focuses on satisfying the underlying concerns of both the parties, meeting many current needs by working together. Through this style, employees develop ownership and commitment. Sometimes this style gives birth to new mutual needs.

### ***How to Minimise (Manage) Inter-Personal Conflicts? -The Managerial Action:***

No manager should avoid a conflict, hoping it will go away. It would be better to ask the participants to describe specific actions they want the other party to take. It would be beneficial to have a third party (meaning a non-direct superior with access to the situation) involved. Finally, it is advisable not to meet separately with people in conflict.



**A manager should take following actions to minimize conflicts:**

**1. Regular Review of Job Descriptions:**

With the pace of change the job description must also change. But this will be possible only when the job descriptions are regularly reviewed.

**2. Establish Rapport and build Relationship with all of Your Subordinates:**

For it, meet them at regular intervals; ask them about their achievements, problems, and challenges.

**3. Regular Reports:**

A manager must get progress report about his subordinates regularly, indicating achievements, current needs and future scenario.

**4. Training:**

Every manager needs to be provided training in interpersonal communication, conflict management, and delegation of authority.

**5. Mutual Development of Procedures:**

For routine tasks, the procedures should be developed keeping in mind the inputs received from employees. If possible, encourage them to write. Such written procedures should be distributed to all concerned. If the need be, concerned employees be trained in those procedures.

**6. Holding Regular Meetings:**

The managers need to hold regular management meetings to inform subordinates about new initiatives to be taken and the progress of current programmes.

**7. Anonymous Suggestion Box:**

Consider such a box in which employees can provide suggestions.

***Factors affecting Conflict Styles:***

**1. Gender:**

Some of us use assertive conflict modes because of our gender and particular kind of socialisation. Some males, because they are male, were taught to “always stand up to someone, and, if you have to fight, then fight”. If one was socialized this way he will be more likely to use assertive conflict modes versus using cooperative modes.

## **2. Self-concept:**

The way we think and feel about ourselves and opinions about others affects as to how we approach conflict with the other person.

## **3. Expectations:**

If we believe that our team or the other person wants to resolve the conflict, we would be positive to resolve the conflict?

## **4. Position/Power:**

Where do we stand in power status relationship with the person we are in conflict? It means whether the other man is equal to, more than, or less than us in status.

## **5. Life Experience:**

Through knowledge and experience we might have gained skills about conflict and “conflict management understanding”. It enables us to determine what conflict mode to use with the particular person with whom we are in conflict.

## **6. Communication skills:**

The basic of conflict resolution and conflict management is how effectively we communicate. People using effective communication will be able to resolve conflicts with greater ease and success.