GROUP DYNAMICS – NOTES (UG SEM II PSYCHOLOGY)

1. Meaning of Group Dynamics

The term group dynamics refers to the processes, forces, and interactions that occur within a group.
It includes how people form groups, behave in groups, how groups function, and how they influence individual behavior.
"Dynamics" = movement, change, interaction → Groups are not static; they constantly evolve.

2. Definition

Different psychologists define group dynamics as:

Kurt Lewin: Group dynamics is the study of the forces operating within groups that influence behavior.
Cartwright & Zander: It refers to the nature of groups, laws of development, and relationships between groups.

> Key idea: Group dynamics helps us understand why people behave differently in groups than alone.

3. Characteristics of a Group

*Two or more people
*Common goals
*Interaction among members
*Interdependence (each member affects others)
*Shared norms and rules
*Role relationships
*Sense of belonging or "we-feeling"
*Structure (leader, followers)

4. Types of Groups

A. Based on relationship

1. Primary Groups

   * Small, intimate, close relationships
   * Eg: Family, close friends

2. Secondary Groups

   * Formal, impersonal, goal-oriented

* Eg: Classroom, workplace

B. Based on formation

1. Formal Groups

   * Created by an organization
   * Have specific roles & rules
   * Eg: Committees, teams

2. Informal Groups

   * Form spontaneously
   * Based on interests & friendships
   * Eg: Peer group

C. Based on membership

1. In-group

 Group you belong to ("we")

2. Out-group

  Group you don't belong to ("they")

5. Stages of Group Development (Tuckman's Model)

1. Forming

   * Group is formed
   * Members are polite & unsure
   * Leader is needed for guidance

2. Storming

   * Conflicts arise
   * Members challenge roles, rules
   * Power struggles occur

3. Norming

   * Cohesion develops
   * Group norms are established
   * Conflicts reduce

4. Performing

  * Group works efficiently towards goals
  * High cooperation & productivity

5. Adjourning

  * Group ends after goal completion
  * Feelings of separation or accomplishment

6. Group Structure

A group has a defined structure including:

A. Roles

* Expected behaviors assigned to members
* Eg: Leader, facilitator, follower

B. Norms

* Shared rules or standards of behavior
* Eg: Attendance rules, communication rules

C. Status

* Social position within the group
* High-status members have more influence

D. Cohesion

* The degree of attraction among group members
* High cohesion → better performance (in most cases)

7. Group Norms

* Norms guide acceptable behavior
* They:

  * Reduce uncertainty
  * Maintain order
  * Promote group survival
  * Facilitate task accomplishment

Types of norms:

*Performance norms (quality/quantity of work)
*Appearance norms (dress)
*Social norms (interaction)
*Resource allocation norms (distribution)

8. Group Cohesion

Definition: The degree to which members feel attached to the group.

Factors influencing cohesion

* Similarity of members
* Group size (smaller = more cohesive)
* Success & achievement
* Clear goals
* Good leadership
* Favourable environment

Effects of high cohesion

* Better communication
* Higher satisfaction
* Increased conformity
* Better performance (if norms are positive)

9. Group Decision-Making

Groups make decisions collectively using methods like:

* Brainstorming
* Consensus
* Majority vote
* Nominal group technique (NGT)

Common Problems

Groupthink

  * Excessive cohesion → members stop questioning decisions
*Group Polarization

  * Group decisions become more extreme than individual opinions

10. Leadership in Groups

Leadership Styles

1. Autocratic
Leader controls decisions

2. Democratic
Member participation encouraged

3. Laissez-faire
Minimal leadership; members work independently

Good leadership promotes:
* Cohesion
* Motivation
* Productivity
* Healthy communication

11. Advantages of Groups

* More ideas & creativity
* Shared responsibility
* Higher motivation
* Better decision-making
* Emotional support

12. Disadvantages of Groups

* Conflict
* Time-consuming decisions
* Social loafing (members put less effort)
* Groupthink
* Domination by few members