

SOS POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION,

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SUBJECT NAME: MANAGING CHANGE IN ORGANISATION

UNIT-V

TOPIC: GROUP COHESIVENESS: MEANING

AND

ITS CONSEQUENCES

MEANING OF GROUP COHESIVENESS:

Group cohesiveness is one of the characteristic features of the groups, which is very important from behavioural point of view. Cohesiveness is the degree to which the group members are attracted to each other and are motivated to stay in the groups. Cohesiveness defines the degree of closeness that the members feel with the groups. It is understood as the extent of liking each member has towards

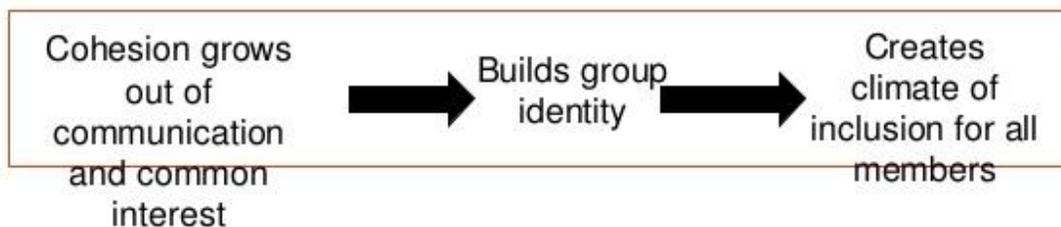
others in the group and how far everyone wants to remain as a member of the group.

“Cohesiveness refers to the extent of unity ‘in the group and is reflected in members’ conformity to the norms of the group, feeling of attraction for each other and wanting to be co-members of the group.” Attraction, cohesiveness and conformity are all intertwined. The more the members feel attracted to the group, the greater will be the group cohesiveness. The greater the cohesiveness, the greater the influence of the group members to persuade one another to conform to the group norms. The greater the conformity, the greater the identity of the members to the group and the greater the group cohesiveness.



What is group cohesiveness?

- Group cohesiveness is the ability to think and act 'as one' if the group is physically together or not.
- A group is said to be in a state of cohesion when its members possess bonds linking them to one another and to the group as a whole.
- According to Stephen P Robbins, "Group cohesiveness is the degree to which members are attracted to each other and are motivated to stay in the group."



Group cohesiveness is visible if the aims of the group and its members coincide. If there is a good attachment between members and similarity of goals then it forms an intact organization.

If the liking between members is not that good the cohesiveness of the group gets weakened. Individual goals are different from group goals lessens the bond between members. If an individual puts his career and desires in the forefront and joins the group for his own selfish interest, it will negatively impact the group.

CONSEQUENCES OF COHESIVENESS:

Group cohesiveness has only positive consequences.

These positive outcomes are explained in detail as follows:

1. MORE PARTICIPATION:

Higher the degree of group cohesiveness, closer will be the interpersonal relationships among the members. As a result members will participate actively in group affairs and activities. As the members consider the group as their own, just like a family, they will help other members of the group in times of need which will further strengthen their bonds. The turnover of members will be very low. If possible, all the members attend the group meetings and group activities and take active part in discussions relating to preparing of strategies for achieving individual and group goals.

2. MORE CONFORMITY:

One of the factors which influence cohesiveness is similarity of attitudes and values. As a result, members tend to like each other and perceive themselves as similar. These characteristics lead members to be relatively dependent on the group for satisfaction and, thus, they are susceptible to being influenced. For example, if

any member is getting involved in organisational politics for enhancing his personal goals, the group might put social pressure on him and make him comply with the group norms.

3. MORE SUCCESS:

Cohesiveness and success are mutually dependent upon each other. Cohesiveness makes the goal achievement easier and goal achievement adds to success. The reason for this relationship is that higher degree of cohesiveness leads to high degree of communication, participation and conformity to group norms. Such coordinated efforts result in agreement about the goals to be achieved, the methods of achieving them and finally achieving the final goals.

4. MORE COMMUNICATION:

Members of cohesive groups communicate with each other more than the members of non-cohesive groups. Because the members share common ideologies, goals, backgrounds or attitudes, they are inclined to greater communicativeness. Such communication is reinforcing as it tends to foster and cement positive social relations as well as depth in personal relationships.

5. MORE PERSONAL SATISFACTION:

Members of cohesive groups are more satisfied as compared to members of non-cohesive groups. This is understandable because if members are not satisfied they will leave the group and join some other group. Members are more satisfied due to so many factors which include friendliness, respect, support, achievement, protection and a feeling of security.

6. HIGH PRODUCTIVITY:

Cohesiveness may contribute to increased productivity because:

- (i) People in cohesive groups experience fewer work related anxieties and tensions
- (ii) Highly cohesive groups tend to have lower absenteeism and turnover and
- (iii) Cohesiveness decreases productivity differences among groups.

Studies consistently show that the relationship of cohesiveness and productivity depends on the performance related norms established by the group. If performance related norms are high, a cohesive group will be more productive than

will a less cohesive group. But if cohesiveness is high and performance norms are low, productivity will be low.

If cohesiveness is low and performance norms are high, productivity increases but less than in high cohesiveness-high norms situation. Where cohesiveness and performance related norms are both low, productivity will tend to fall into the low to moderate range.

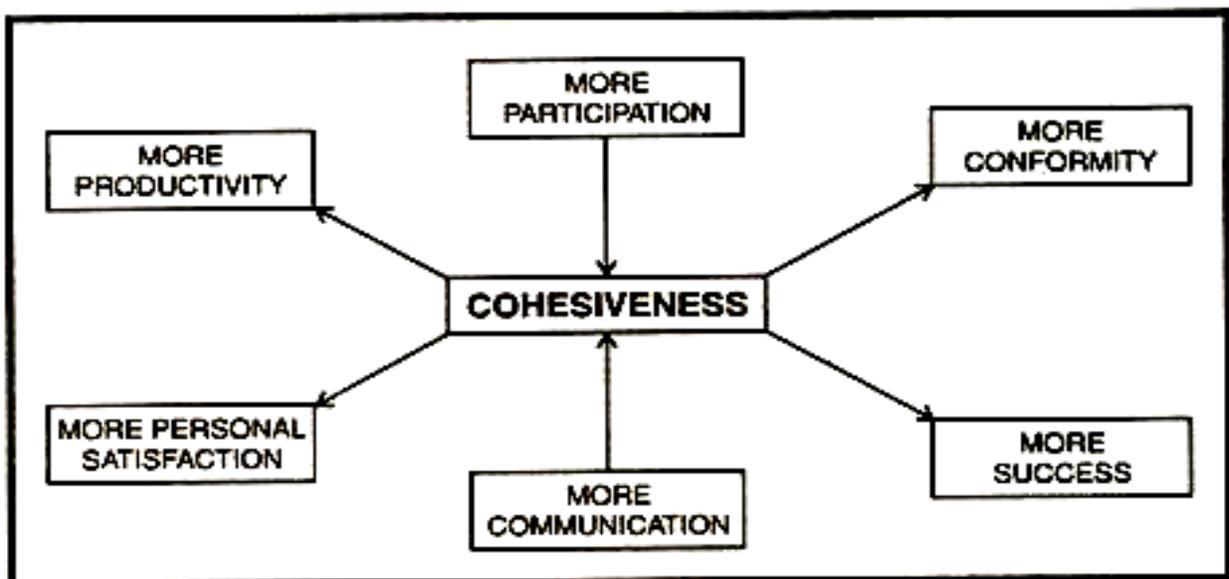
These conclusions are summarized in the following figure:

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COHESIVENESS, PERFORMANCE NORMS AND PRODUCTIVITY		
COHESIVENESS		
	HIGH	LOW
PERFORMANCE NORMS		
HIGH	HIGH PRODUCTIVITY	MODERATE PRODUCTIVITY
LOW	LOW PRODUCTIVITY	MODERATE TO LOW PRODUCTIVITY

Fig: Relationship between Cohesiveness Performance Norms and Productivity

The worst situation for the manager is a highly cohesive group with low performance norms. Here members are highly motivated to work for their personal satisfaction only not for the organisational goals. Here the success of the management will depend upon how to direct the activities of highly cohesive group towards the successful attainment of organisational goals.

The consequences of cohesiveness are now illustrated with the help of the following diagram:



**MANAGERIAL ACTIONS FOR INCREASING OR ENCOURAGING
COHESIVENESS:**

A manager can follow any one or more of the following suggestions to encourage cohesiveness:

1. Make the group smaller
2. Encourage agreement with group goals
3. Increase the time members spend together
4. Increase the status of the group and the perceived difficulty of getting membership of the group
5. Stimulate competition with other groups.
6. Give rewards to the group rather than to members
7. Physically isolate the group
8. Increase membership homogeneity
9. Increase interaction among members

MANAGERIAL ACTIONS TO DECREASE OR DISCOURAGE

COHESIVENESS:

Sometimes high cohesiveness adversely affects the productivity. In such cases managers have to reduce the cohesiveness of the groups.

Following are some of the actions which can be taken by the managers:

1. Induce disagreement on group goals
2. Increase membership heterogeneity
3. Restrict interactions among members
4. Increase group size
5. Reduce the time members spend together
6. Allocate rewards to individuals rather than to group member.
7. Remove physical isolation
8. Disband the group
9. Introduce a dominating member.