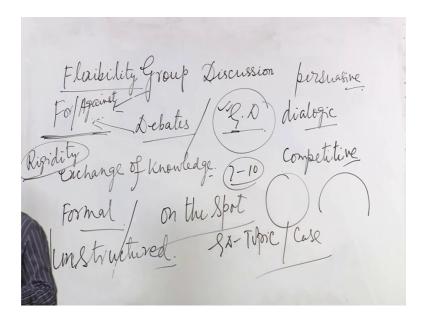
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Lecture - 42 Group Discussion Part I

Good morning friends, this is Binod Mishra, and you are listening to my lectures on Soft Skills. As you all remember in the previous lectures, we had talked about group communication. And today we are going to talk about another major form of group communication, which can be termed as group discussion. Now, you might be thinking what is group discussion. As humans since all of we have the tendency to form groups as we said the other day, but when you are in groups what do you do, you are not only doing an activity all the time, but at times you are talking also.

So, in simple terms when we talk maybe, it is not a part of the discussion, but it is a part of the sharing of our experiences and feelings. But when the same sharing and experiences get a formal touch, it is called group discussion. Now, the word discussion is very important here, and that actually takes you back to your school days, when perhaps many of you had a chance to take part in debates.

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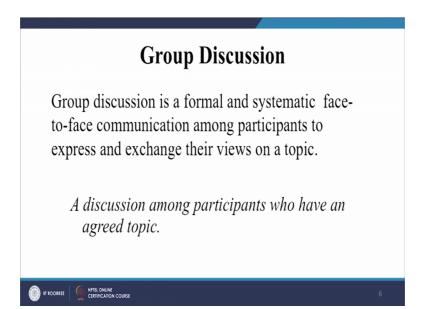
So, before we move onto talk about group discussion, let us throw some light on debates, because it is very essential are to distinguish between debates and group discussions.

Most of the time, many of us get confused with one term or the other. When we talk about the word discussion, we can say that discussion is actually an exchange of knowledge. Friends, we discuss and when we discuss we actually share some piece of information, some piece of knowledge, all individuals in that capacity have different sort of experiences. And hence their knowledge level is also different. In the previous lecture, we also talked about how groups can be formal, groups can be informal.

So, when you are discussing over a cup of tea that comes under a sort of informal discussion where you have certain liberties are to change your track to bring some other topics as well, but when you are going to discuss it formally, we call it group discussion. Now, another thing that you would like to know is why is group discussion so important what are its uses, and how we can participate in a discussion.

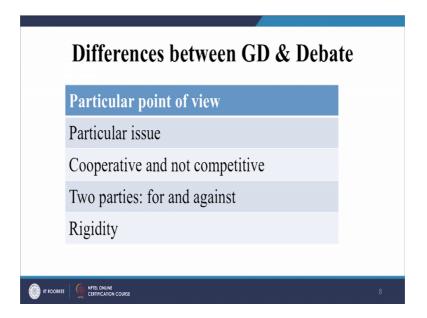
Imagine you go for a job fair, and you find that there are quite a good number of candidates waiting to be recruited, waiting for their turns. Especially many organizations nowadays they have actually made GD - criteria for eliminating some of the candidates or short-listing some of the candidates. In many organizations where the number of applications are too many, they actually follow a formula and the formula is because they have a limited number of vacancies. So, in that way what they do is they can short list in the first instance through GD followed by some other test. But then there are many organizations which actually give too much importance to GD because they have certain things to evaluate. Hence as a candidate in a present day world in a globalized world where you are looking for jobs, where you are looking for change in your jobs and all, it has become quite mandatory for you to know what actually is a GD and how you can participate in order to be successful in a GD.

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Now as the word GD goes we say it is a group discussion it is not a discussion between two people. I mean when we talk about the number we will also find that groups can be large groups can be short. So, it is actually a discussion in a group. Now, what actually how are debates different from GD, you have to understand this very importantly because all of you during your school days and even at the intermediate level you had been participating in several debate, is not it. So, when you participated in a debate, you had prepared your topic very well. Now, when it comes to preparation you will find that in a debate, you are given the option, there is an option and the option is that they give you an issue, they give you a topic. And then there are candidates who will speak for the topic, there are candidates who will speak against topic this.

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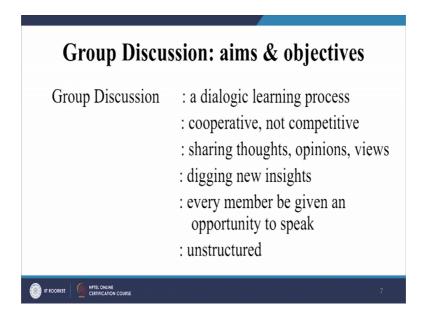


They call motion, for the motion, against the motion. And when they participate in a debate you will find that if one candidate is speaking for he continues to speak for the motion. And if somebody speaks against the motion, he continues to speak against the motion. And for that both either for or against they actually gather facts or they gather some argument at times you may feel that this argument because you know you have the option of contradicting that argument as you know at an opponent since you are going to speak against. So, you may have a lot of choice, if you are speaking for and so all the arguments that you will gather that will be far whereas, for the other party who speaks against. They will go on speaking against, they will try to prove their mettle by bringing logic by a bringing a say arguments by bringing ideas which go against.

But then this is not in a GD, because this GD even debate is also a formal discourse, it is also a formal discourse. So, formality is there in both the cases so but then in a GD even debate is also a face-to-face discussion and GD is also face to face discussion, debate is also formal, GD is also formal. But then when it comes to showing the difference, you will find in a debate you at times become very emotional, the language that you choose that also appears to be very flowery, full of you know good words you bring because you simply want to prove your point. But in a GD you actually have to cite facts, because it is a formal discussion, it is your face-to-face communication among participants who express and exchange their views on a particular topic.

The topic now the question about the topic. When it is a debate I mean the people the organization who conducts the debate, they provide you the topic and this topic is given to you much in advance maybe for a week, they actually advertise it different ways. Maybe they give you ten days, and these ten days you are preparing you are using all your mind to show that you are a powerful debater. But when it is GD there are so many options suppose you are going for a job fair and the first round is GD, you can never expect what topic will be there. On many occasions, the topic is actually announced on the spot, it is announced on the spot, because the recruiters they actually want to judge so many things.

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But before we go into the nitty gritty of it let us try to see what actually are the aims and the objectives of GD. A GD is a dialogic learning process it is a dialogic learning process. What do we mean by this word dialogic? Dialogic is it is not you know it is not one person who continues to speak throughout. Moreover, there are so many people it is in the form of a dialog and this dialogic form is between so many people. Now, when we talk about this dialogic form, even when there is a debate there is again a sort of discourse and the discourse is between for and against, but at the same time you will find there is a lot of competition in debate, there is a competition.

So, a competitive tone is there at times people in order to outshine the other candidates, they try to put for their views in such a manner, at times the language there is muffled also. Muffled with meaning muffled, which sometimes you know the language also becomes satirical, but in a GD it is a cooperative atmosphere. So, it is a cooperative atmosphere, where all the participants of the GD. Now, here let me tell you because you also might be thinking how many people what amount of time is given to you for GD. So, in depending upon the number of participants usually you will find, when a GD is organized, first is there is a seating arrangement, this seating arrangement is actually provided by the people who are conducting this GD.

So, this seating arrangement may sometimes be circular I mean people will be sitting in a circular manner sometimes, it may be in a semicircular manner, where all the participants will sit. And they should sit in such a manner that they should see every other individual in the group face to face. The number of people participating in GD may be from 7 to 10 depending upon the large number at time it so happens because you know the people who are going to judge you through GD, they are in search of certain trait certain qualities that their candidates budges.

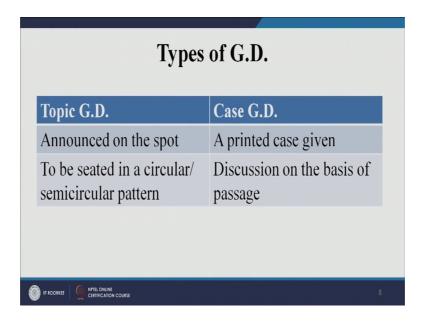
Moreover, when you sit in a GD suppose the topic has been announced and you are sit in a GD. First day they provide you are the seating arrangement where you can sit, and then the topic is announced. Now, when the topic is announced all the participants of the GD they are provided some amount of time few minutes they are provided. And then during these few minutes, people have to think about know, people have to think about because there are certain words in the topic of the GD which may actually ignite your thoughts which are which can be treated as keywords. And then when the GD starts you will find people start sharing their views, experiences, and since the number of people as we said as the background of the people is also different. Groups have one advantage that people are from different background, hence their knowledge is different, hence their presentation style is different, hence their behavior is different. Moreover they see to it that discussion continues and it actually helps because topic you are given, but it helps the new thoughts it helps get some new information.

And every member in the group now there is no hard and fast rule that somebody or the panelist will tell you who to speak, when to speak why to speak, in which way to speak this actually you have to do. Because GD is very unstructured whereas, debate you will find debate is very much a structured people actually provide you the list that these candidates will speak for these candidates will speak against and they follow an order.

But in a GD, GD is unstructured why unstructured there is no provision as to who will speak whom who will talk to whom is not it. So, when the topic is announced and you have been provided with a few minutes, then the discussions starts.

Now, what you might be thinking is who will speak first, this is a very difficult question, nobody can answer. So, when the topic is announced and the a time given for you to think and all gets over when the real time starts, the discussion has to start. Now, we will talk about how when the discussion starts, you will find somebody from the group they will initiate the discussion, they will start the discussion. But remember in GD why I say the GD is unstructured and debate is structured, because in debates you will find participants who are speaking for will continue to speak for I mean you have to follow the same order. Here there is no such provision in GD no rigidity is allowed one candidate may start speaking, one candidate may hold a thought of view. But after some time he may feel if it is detected by somebody in the group he may feel, and if he finds that the views of others are convincing then he has got a liberty to change his stance.

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It is very pertinent to are note here that GD can be of two types. One is a topic GD topic and another may be a case GD. What are the basic differences between the two especially it is up to the organizations, what sort of GD they want they may provide you a case GD in a case GD they will give you a printed case. And the case will be given in

details I mean it will be related to the real life situation, sometimes they may also provide you a sort of imaginative case, fine.

Now, the question is when they give you a printed case, and they want you to discuss, naturally people will start the thinking on the case, and then they will come up. But in a topic GD the topic is announced, and the topic is very clear, the case may be a sort of interpretation the case may be a sort of interpretation, there will be some amount of summary given, it is actually beneficial for the candidate. And here the case is given with the aim that all these participants finally, will come to a solution maybe there is a problem given because they want to see your analytical skills, they want to see your decisive skills, they want to see your reasoning ability, they want to see your behavior. I mean there are so many factors involved into it.

So, the case may be an interpretation of the situation and the expectation is that by the end of the case GD, some solution will be there or the group will come to one solution in order to solve the problem. And moreover, they can also provide certain suggestions ways and means as to how this case can be resolved. But in a topic GD, since it is unstructured, I mean even in the case GD also a people you know if I am holding for to one view and if I feel if I get convinced by the views of other person I mean flexibility is the hallmark of a GD. Flexibility the candidates have the sort of flexibility. You may look at the case you may look at all the angles all the possibilities, and then finally, you have a sort of liberty that if earlier you were maintaining a sort of measure or you had a sort of view, you can change your views

Now, you may also wonder and about the language and the style. What sort of language should be there. In debaters, I told you it is on several panels where I have been I have been as a judge judging the debates and all, I could find that the language of majority of the candidates were very flowery ornamentation, I mean a lot of exaggeration also at times. Now, this is not possible in a GD.

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Language & Style ✓ Simple, concise and appropriate words ✓ Free from errors of grammar and usage ✓ Precise and exact expressions ✓ Persuasive ✓ Difficult and unfamiliar words to be avoided ✓ Flowery language to be restricted

Here you have to have a language that is simple, that is concise, the words use are very appropriate. Because all the people in the GD they actually have to listen to each other unless and until you listen can there be a solution to a problem, unless and until you understand can you add, can you delete certain things, can you revise you cannot, hence understanding is very important. You cannot understand as I have been saying in several of my lectures that understanding is impossible if of solid words are used, or solid expressions are used and if pompous words are used.

Hence the need of the our is that you will use the language that everybody can understand even the approach you will find the approach has to be very persuasive. I mean you have to use a language that is convincing because all the people in the GD, they are people who are having some knowledge and that is why if you are going to use the language that is convincing, you have to put your views and you have to put your views in a way you have to put your idea ideas in a way that you can convince other members of the group. So, you need to restrict yourself from the uses of language which is very cumbersome which is long winded words, which are sesquipedalian so these are not welcome in a GD.

Suppose, I mean how you start that also may be the question. Suppose, the GD topic has been announced and you are going to start I mean at times you will feel that everyone is looking at everyone as to who will start. The situation is like who will bell the cat, but

no. Somebody has to start again there is another thing there are many people who are under the impression that if he starts perhaps, he will be given more marks, he will be rated better that is not the question. Because if everybody starts to speaking at the same time and starts initiating, he will actually become a cacophony, it will become a very noisy situation and nothing will come out of it. There has to be noise, but this noise has to be positive. Noise in the sense there has to be a discussion not much of argumentation and at times people when they argue, they also forget the fact that the language that they are using may hurt some other members of the group.

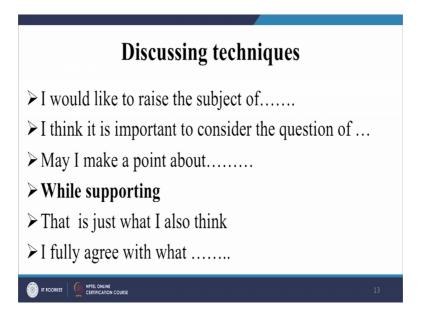
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Strong: • I strongly feel/ believe/am convinced • I am pretty sure/it is pretty clear Neutral: • I think that/ I feel that/as I find • According to me/personally I think

So, when suppose you are going to put forth your views, sometimes you want to put forth your views very strongly say you may say I strongly feel, I believe, I mean language has to be very polite. I am convinced by what my friend, Mr. x and x says. There are situations where you will find that there has been a lot of you know conflict. Conflict will arise because there are more members, so conflict will arise, but there is somebody who will try to mitigate the conflict, and who is that somebody that is a leader. But here there is no designated leader I will discuss there are times, when you can also become neutral, there are times when you can show your confidence level. And you can say I am pretty sure, I am quite confident. Sometimes you want to maintain a sort of neutrality, you may say according to me or sometimes you want to you feel that some bodies views goes an extra mile or may not be possible.

So, you can say that maybe his personal views, but what I think it appears that we are perhaps going to talk about this topic in such a manner that no solution seems to be possible. Because if it is a group people in the group are having differences, and this difference will come out because there is discussion, when you start discussing people there are many ways you know you have to create a sort of variety in your language. And you have also to ensure that you are very a polite. If you begin today we have gathered to discuss on such and such topic, and then you give a little detail because whatever you are going to say you are going to support.

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You may say may I make a point about I think it is important to consider the problem of are the question of you will find that in a GD, there are some candidates who will support your views, they are some candidate who will oppose your views. So, you have to find out who is your supporter, who are your opponents. And if you feel your point has already been said and you simply want to support then you can say I fully agree with what Mohan says on this issue. Maybe we can go after further and find are the absolutes of this problem, I mean the way you will use language or you can also say this is just what I also think. Your views are sometimes you find that a person is not going to be convinced, because there are many people who will not feel like being convinced. So, in such a situation what they will do is they will actually try to create a sort of ruckus in the entire discussion and they will try to put their own weight. In such a situation there are

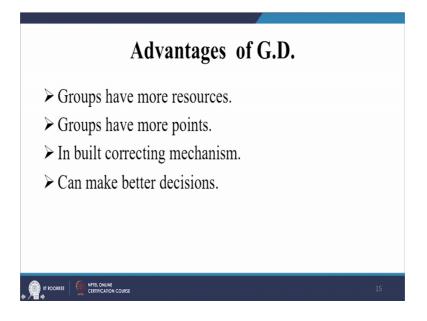
some people who will have to enact a role and this role is not decided that anyone can take at any situation.

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To bring a discussion back to the mainstream I am afraid we are deviating/ drifting from the point. Could we stick to the topic? That's very interesting but I don't think it is indeed to the point.

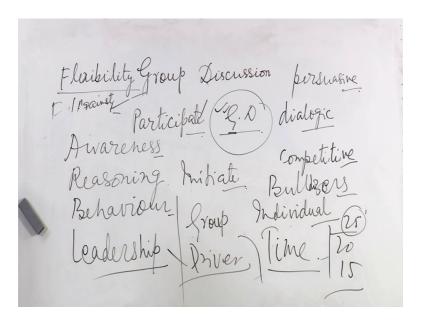
We can always say could we stick to the topic, I do fear that we are perhaps deviating from this topic. We are perhaps deviating from the topic may we come to the real point of discussion, I mean these are some of the waves which will help you are bring the discussion back to its center. Because at times people go astray and then they speak something which actually creates the sort of deviation. Sometimes some person says and you do not want to hurt him or her, you can always say that is very interesting, but I do not think it is indeed to the point, I mean this is how you can bring the discussion. We have already talked about the advantages of GD.

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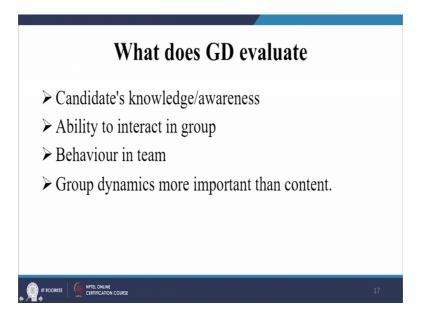
Since there are so many people, the views are diverse; since there are people from different backgrounds so naturally they will have more points. And there is one additional advantage in the GD that it has got a sort of in built mechanism of correction. Some person says something and the other person does not feel, it is appropriate, so what he or she does is he or she tries to correct it. So, when you feel that it is convincing, you can agree, but you have all right to disagree at times and you can say perhaps that appears to me as your personal view, this is my view of looking at things. Now, the question is how is it helpful it is helpful not only in eliminating people or not only in short listing people, but then sometimes you will find that when a crisis is there, GD is one of the best methods are to bring some remedy.

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Moreover, it also expresses a lot of things about people. Now, what is what are the things that we should look for and as a candidate who is going to participate in a GD, what are the things that you expect you should possess the first is you need to be aware, because the topic of the GD may be anything and everything. So, you need to have a sort of awareness this awareness is very important again.

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You have to have a sort of ability of reasoning you said something, but you know it is not saying just for the sake of saying you stated something, but you have to state it in a very

reasoning manner. So, you have to support facts, you have to provide some reasoning of why you are saying like that. The way you discussed in the team your behavior is also evaluated, how you behave. Because you know as human beings we may at times become emotional, but that should be kept apart, it is not a question to be emotional. You have to state your own point of view, but not at the cost of your it ill-behavior or in an ill manner you have to show your behavior in a way that every member in the group feels that you are well, behaved group dynamics are actually more important than content.

What other additional things you should have I mean initiative that is very important. As I said in the beginning, somebody has to initiate. Meaning there by somebody has to begin. Then motivation people are looking for your motivation you will find it for GD starts there are some people of course, they are very aggressive, very excited, they feel very motivated, but there are some people who actually keep themselves apart they are less motivated. Now, some of the group members has to show that responsibility that if there is a one person who is not trying to participate, you will have to ignite, you will have to encourage.

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Moreover, as an individual participant, you are preserve your assertiveness, by assertiveness I do not mean that you become quite argumentative and you take an extreme stance and all. Whatever you say you say it with full confidence with full commitment and then you also are expected to listen. Because these panelists who are

judging you the recruiters who are judging you, they are looking for lots of qualities in you how good a listener you are, how good a leader you are, how good a team member you are how good an initiator you are how can you take some initiative and so your endeavor that you can do.

But remember if you are participating in a group discussion you have two major roles to play first is that you have a group responsibility, you have an individual responsibility also. People who participate in a GD, they have to ensure that they follow both the responsibilities I mean how are they different. As a participant you have an individual responsibility, your individual responsibility is to speak your individual responsibility is to behave well, your individual responsibility is also to listen my dear friend. There are times when people often say I do not have anything to contribute, you know when I start judging some of my students through a group discussion, they say sir I knew a lot, but then I could not speak, I mean the question is unless and until you are interested in a group discussion, you will not speak.

So, you have to show your interest, while showing your interest, you have to listen not all of us are always having a lot of knowledge, but if you listen to what others are saying naturally you will contribute because the panelists they are looking at so many things fine. So, you have a group responsibility, your group responsibility is that you have to commit yourself to the goals of the group. And the goals of the group is to have a discussion in a very conducive atmosphere in a very amicable manner, where all the participants are performing.

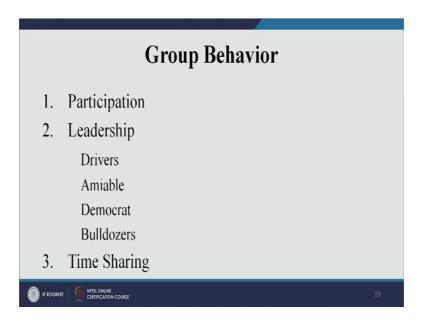
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Group Responsibilities ➤ Commit yourself to the goals of the group. ➤ Fulfil your individual assignment. ➤ Avoid interpersonal conflict within the group. ➤ Encourage full participation. ➤ Help keep the group on track.

Then you are also to see that your individual assignment to what if you are a leader, but you know a leader cannot be a leader unless and until you as an individual also he is a very good human being. So, by being a good human being, you should know that you have one individual responsibility to participate in the group. If there are situations of interpersonal conflict within the group, so some of you, you will find some of you should come forward to resolve that crisis or to bring the discussion back to the main stream.

Also see that full participation is in swing full participation people have to participate. If there is an inert speaker or if there is an inert participant in the group, inert means that somebody who does not participate, you have to encourage, because there are at times there are questions as to why, somebody who wanted to speak as he sold when he first spoke after that he suddenly became reticent, he became silent. You also have to see that the entire group is cohesive there are differences of course, but differences are ideological, there are no differences at the personal level. The first criterion of your group behavior is your participation, ensure that everybody participates even you.

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And then from your own participation will come out leadership, we have discussed during our previous lecture as to what sort of leadership, leaders are there. But here there is a different sort of leader here, here there is not an leader who is already designated. Here leadership roles can change, anyone can be a leader at any point of time. And this leadership is tested when there is conflict in the group, when there is caves in the group. And when we talk about leadership, the leadership has several you know qualities the first is a driver, my driver I mean somebody who starts.

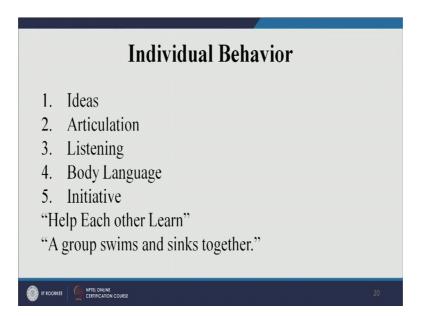
So, the panelist is looking at the activities of all the group members who started the discussion, who initiated the discussion. So, a leader may be a driver, a leader may be amiable when I say amiable, what I mean is he will speak and then he will remain silent. He appears to be very neutral at times, such a sort of leader is not acceptable you see you have to ensure that throughout you see that the group emerges as a cohesive group. Then there is another category of leader who is a democrat, a democrat I mean that is the best form of leadership are to be practiced in a GD. A democrat is one who sees that everything is in order. Sometimes if there is caves, it is the responsibility of a leaders who will restore the caves to the normalcy.

And then there is other category of leaders which you can call bulldozers, who are these people bulldozers. So, these people they are actually the disturbing elements in a group. Now, such a person he is very selfish, he may be very selfish. He will try to pull a put his

own way every now and then, but then he tries to dominate such a person tries to dominate in the group. Now, in every group you will find you will come across such people who tries to dominate. The question is if there is such a person in the group, they can also be cut to their size, how to do that will we will discuss, because these people either try to dominate physically they try to dominate vocally, but you will find that they are lacking in reasoning. If you find some fault in their line of thinking, if you find out some weakness in their logic, naturally there will be cut to size because here they have nobody has come to fight, everybody has come to discuss

So, then it is also the leaders role to see how time it shared equally, sharing of time. Now, the question is how much of time is given for a GD that is a question which would be completely left to the people who are organizing this. But in most of the situations, either the GD maybe for 15 minutes, sometimes it is for 20 minutes, sometimes it is for 25 minutes, now it is for the leader and as an individual you should also see that everybody during this time has been able to discuss things. Sometimes it so happens that people run sort of ideas and before time they feel like finishing it, meaning thereby they did not have much to say there are you know there are several dangerous in a GD, where people feel that they cannot continue for a long time and they are finished even before.

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But then even in that case, the panelist has the capability to judge whether you are having a beautiful blend of group behavior and your individual behavior. As an individual you

should have ideas behavior as I said you should also ensure that you are listening. And throughout what is of utmost importance is your body language. Now, what is your body language we have had a lot of discussion when we discussed about body language, but see when you are speaking you know all of us we have been saying that whenever we speak something we try to compliment to through our body language. The body language should never be negative you speak a point somebody tried to oppose it, but even that has to be taken very graciously through your eyes, through your face, through the way that you are sitting, you are to show that you are totally committed to the group, no negative body language. Because it is always said that all the members of the group can help each other, help each other learn a group swims and sinks together.

My dear friends when we talk about a group discussion and the various procedures involved in it, we see that unless and until we follow a sort of standard. And by standard I mean allow everyone to express their ideas, and you also express your ideas and finally, you will find something that will come will be a sort of solution will be a sort of agreement or at times a sort of an alternative to the situation that has been given.

Groups have always much to contribute as an individual you also who are bubbling with ideas you can contribute a lot to the entire proceedings of the GD. But remember if there are so many people, there has bound to be some conflict, and this conflict will be resolved. And we will see in the next lecture how these conflicting situations can be resolved with the help of a leader, and how you can proceed further in this business of group discussion. Form good groups, but communicate in groups; communicate not only individually, but communicate also as a collective team members, because you have one goal and the common goal is to discuss.

Thank you very much.