

Name of the Exercise: ORGANIZATION OF SEMINAR, SYMPOSIUM, WORKSHOP AND CONFERENCE

Group techniques are the means by which the wants and desires of a group are translated into goals and the ways of achieving these goals. Group techniques are also known as training techniques or ways. Actually these are pre-designed pattern for human interaction and offer a better potential for progress towards goals. Many techniques are available, some of which are frequently used in different situations such as i) Seminar; ii) Symposium; iii) Workshop and iv) Conference.

A. Seminar:

It is one of the most important forms of group discussion. Comprises the presentation of papers by the participants on the basis of their study and research under the guidance of an expert followed by a discussion.

Characteristics:

- i) It is usually arranged in educational and research institutions as it closely allied to research.
- ii) The number of participations is usually quite small, perhaps no more than 50 (15-25 persons is a good number).
- iii) Discussion papers are prepared and presented by the experts based on their study and research.
- iv) Open discussion follows a formal presentation based on the papers presented by the experts in order to encourage participants to share their views so that the range of issues can be explored.
- v) It may have one or more plenary sessions.
- vi) At the end, some conclusions and recommendations are made for taking future action.
- vii) It is generally speaker centered i.e. a teacher/student/ researcher researches a topic, presents the findings to other teachers/ students/ researchers and leads the ensuing discussion.

Uses:

- i) To share results of a study/ project.
- ii) To plan action strategies.
- iii) To focus attention on some new idea.

Advantages:

- i) It provides learning through sharing of knowledge and experience.
- ii) An authority guides the discussion and thus promotes learning.
- iii) A well seminar covers detailed and systematic discussion through investigation and careful inquiry.
- iv) Participants know what is to be discussed and they have the opportunity to participate.

Limitations:

- i) Often the right leader is difficult to find.
- ii) Often, the members are not prepared to devote the necessary amount of time and hard work to prepare and present the reports.
- iii) Members usually do not make equal contributions-some play only a passive role.
- iv) There is a need to summarize main issues at the end of the seminar.

- v) Digression may happen if the leader is unable to keep the participants to the topic under discussion.

Requirements:

- i) A semi-circular seating arrangement.
- ii) A comfortable and relaxed atmosphere.
- iii) Facilities for note taking and preparing reports.
- iv) A well balanced sound system including cordless microphone for the use of the participants.
- v) Visual (OHP) Slide Projector and audio-visual equipment (Video) if necessary.

Procedure of Conducting Seminar:

- i) From the beginning to the end a chairman should preside over the meeting.
- ii) After formal opening the chairman asks the expert to present his reports.
- iii) The expert would present the report at one or more special sessions (If necessary), with the use of available visual aids and adequate supplies of written handouts.
- iv) The expert invites questions from the audience after presentation.
- v) Each member must be encouraged to participate to the fullest extent possible- anyone who is shy or reserved must be involved by asking them questions.
- vi) The seminar should be followed up by an adequate number of summarizing and evaluating sessions.
- vii) Addressing by special guests and chief guest (if any).
- viii) The chairman closes the seminar with proper acknowledgement and thanks to the co-operators.

B. Symposium:

It is meeting in which a series of talks, speeches or lectures are presented by several individuals one after the other on the different phases of a single subject problem.

Characteristics:

- i) A Chairman normally opens the meeting with a few “stage-setting” remarks and calls upon the speakers to deliver their speeches on the respective phases of subject problem with the time limit (usually 5-25 minutes) given to them.
- ii) It is a modification of lecture, i.e. more than one speaker presents more than one point of view.
- iii) Ideas are expressed systematically and completely without interruption.
- iv) Complex problems are divided into logical component parts.
- v) It does not provides any time for general discussion i.e. audiences are not allowed to participate in discussion with speaker.
- vi) Duplication and rejection of talks are not expected.
- vii) It is a way of information gathering at the professional level.

Uses:

- i) To present new material concisely but logically.
- ii) To present several differing views on the one subject.
- iii) To provide a just analysis of a controversial issues.

- iv) To clarify conflicting aspects of a complex problem and express the relationship of the parts to the whole.

Advantages:

- i) It provides for differing points of views.
- ii) Time limited speeches minimize digressions.
- iii) Brief speeches help to maintain audience patience and interest.
- iv) A comprehensive coverage becomes possible.
- v) Greater resources are available to answer questions.

Limitations:

- i) It must be run as a formal event.
- ii) The audience does not normally participate at all until the very end.
- iii) Often time limitations cannot be checked.

Requirements:

- i) Every member of the audience must be able to see and hear comfortably.
- ii) A stage and loud speakers may be needed by a larger audience.

Procedure of Conducting Symposium:

- i) The chairman introduces each speaker with a few brief remarks.
- ii) A short question period may follow each talk or the questions may be reserved for a formal discussion period at the end.
- iii) A period may be kept for the exchange of questions and comments between the speakers.
- iv) The chairman needs to keep a firm control on the meeting and to see that the questions are spread put evenly between the speakers- otherwise the last speaker tends to be questioned most often.

C.Workshop:

It is a co-operative gathering of individuals who discuss, learn and apply practical skills under expert supervision. It may be held for a day or a number of consecutive days. The participations who work together in small groups usually discuss, learn and apply practical skills which they derive themselves. It is used mostly for professional improvement and in-service training.

Characteristics:

- i) It may be held for a day or a number of consecutive days (two days are usually considered a minimum duration).
- ii) There should be a planning session where all participants are involved from the beginning.
- iii) Participants exchange ideas, experiences and skills based on which they can prepare a program for future action.
- iv) It helps to correctly doing a job and proper shaping of an action oriented program.
- v) It should be held in a conducive environment both in terms of its physical setting and availability of resource materials.
- vi) Much of the time should be devoted to work sessions in which all of the participants work with others on problems.
- vii) There should be a summarizing and evaluating session at the end of workshop.

Uses:

- i) To identify and explore and seek solutions to work-related problems.
- ii) To plan for future action.
- iii) To build-up a text or construct proceedings (trainer's manual).

Advantages:

- i) It can be a good basis for problem solving.
- ii) It generates more ideas and promotes confidence in agreed-upon solutions.
- iii) A great deal of experience can be obtained.
- iv) It reinforces learning in a realistic and meaningful way.

Limitations:

- i) It is time consuming and as such can be seen as boring.
- ii) It requires a high staff-to-student ratio.
- iii) It requires more space and equipment than normally needed for a lecture series.
- iv) Its members must be willing and able to work independently and yet to co-operate closely.

Requirements:

- i) A common meeting place, with additional rooms for workshop.
- ii) Semi-circular seating arrangements.
- iii) "Need-to-know" information handout for residential workshop which include details of travel arrangements, sleeping accommodation, mail collection and delivery times, meal times, whereabouts of toilets, etc.
- iv) An adequate library and other resource materials required for research.
- v) Audio-visual materials for recording ideas and reporting back to full groups.

Procedure of Conducting of Workshop:

- i) Clear objectives and goals should be set.
- ii) Planning should be made well in advance.
- iii) Members should be selected based on their anticipated potential contribution and their experience rather than for reasons of prestige or seniority.
- iv) An opening speaker should be selected who will address the importance of the workshop i.e. a fresh perspective on members' work and responsibilities.

D. Conference:

The term conference means "to bring together". It is a meeting in which experiences and opinions are sought among a group of people with common interest and who have special qualifications in the area or among people who are capable of analyzing a problem from information provided by competent persons.

Characteristics:

- i) It may be between only two people or as many as fifty or more but usually does not allow as a large number of people as found in convention.
- ii) It is generally arranged by different Associations, Societies which designate the type of conference such as science conference, crops conference, religious education conference, etc.
- iii) Participants are usually close-knit group who consult together on problems which they found seriously needed.
- iv) Time is taken at the opening session to review the conference objectives, methods and responsibilities of participants, the role of resource persons, group leaders and other personnel.
- v) If the conference is large, formation of small groups is necessary to encourage the expressions of participants' ideas.
- vi) If the duration of conference is long, registrations including registration fees for lunch and banquet tickets, accommodation charge, travel expense, information booths and miscellaneous items are needed to arrange by the organizers.

- vii) There should be a set of rapporteurs in order to facilitate preparation of proceedings.

Uses:

- i) A group with a common interest discusses a narrow technical area (e.g. Dairy farmers' conference, Agriculturists' Conference, Engineers' Conference).
- ii) To develop promotion plans (e.g. Plant trees, save nation).
- iii) Members usually discuss topics of high interest to them.
- iv) Enthusiasts are brought together to share their expertise and to make plan.

Limitations:

- i) Often hard to predict number who will attend.
- ii) Arrangements must often be made to provide for guest speakers, a venue, accommodation and various other costs for an unknown number.
- iii) Degree of success is often hard to measure.

Requirements:

- i) Auditorium, comfortable seating, small meeting rooms, catering, toilet, transport arrangements, accommodation, special equipment for the media and for speakers, audio-visual aids, display facilities, etc.
- ii) Promotion and publicity, registrations, compiling and publishing program, handouts and post publicity.
- iii) Accurate evaluating and follow-up procedures.

Procedure of Conducting conference:

- i) Usually a Chairman should preside over the meeting.
- ii) The speakers present different issues of common interests before the audience.
- iii) A sub-committee is usually to be formed to make recommendations as an outcome of the conference.