

CROWD

DEFINITION

- Kimballyoung **“A crowd is a gathering of considerable number of persons around a centre or point of common attention.”**
- According to Horton and Hunt (1964), ‘a crowd is a temporary collection of people reacting together to stimuli’.
- Eshleman and Cashion (1983) defined it as ‘temporary or transitory groups of people in face-to-face contact who share a common interest or focus of attention’.
- For Giddens (1997), ‘a crowd is any sizable collection of people who are in direct interaction with one another in a public place’.

Characteristics of Crowd

- **(i) Transitoriness:**
- Contrary to a psychological group which is more or less permanent a crowd is quite temporary or short lived.
- **(ii) Shoulder to shoulder Contact:**
- In a crowd there is more physical contact than a group
- **(iii) Common and Primary Motivation:**
- A **sense of mass strength** is found in a crowd situation from the common motivation of the crowd members.

- **(iv) Interaction:**
- In the process of interaction, all the psychological functions like perception, learning, thinking, emotion and motivation are involved.
- They are also influenced by the behaviour of the group in a greater or lesser degree.
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- **(v) Backward and Forward Movement:**
- In a crowd, there is constant forward and backward movement. Some are at the fringe and some are at the centre.
- Those who are at the fringe are not the active members of the crowd. **They are called passive onlookers.**
- However, those who are in the centre, are actually interested with the group goal and are called **more active members.**
- But, there is always a change in the position of the members of the crowd. Those who are in the fringe may come forward i.e., to the centre if they are more interested to take active part. Hence in a crowd backward and forward movement takes place constantly.

- **(vi) Suggestion and Imitation:**
- Every member of an action crowd is particularly influenced by what others in the crowd do and accordingly imitates others in the crowd.
- When people see others running towards a gathering even without knowing what has happened, and without even ascertaining what is the matter, why people have gathered, they also run.
- This is due to **the effect of suggestion**. They imitate them and behave in a similar way

- **(vii) Mental Homogeneity:**
- The members of an active crowd show a similarity in feelings, thought and action even though they come from different socio-economic and educational background.
- This uniformity in behaviour irrespective of difference in I.Q., education and occupation led LeBon to coin the concept of 'group mind'.
- LeBon said that the individual in a crowd loses his originality, his own personality and acts like machine

- **(viii) Social Facilitation:**
- The activity of each member in an active crowd is facilitated and influenced by other members of the crowd.
- Here, sometimes they lose their usual self, rational behaviour and behave in a very emotional, irresponsible manner without knowing what is wrong and what is right.

- **(ix) Irrationality and Heightened Emotionality:**
- The members of an action crowd or mob are found to be most intolerant, irrational, indisciplined and unreasonable.
- That reasoning which suits their purpose at the very moment is only utilized.
- The advantages and disadvantages, the faults and repercussions of this behaviour is never examined in a cool and rational manner.
- Heightened emotionality and irrationality go together

- **(x) Diminished Sense of Responsibility:**
- In an action crowd situation, the sense of responsibility decreases than when one is alone or in a group.
- The sense of morality, reasoning, justice also decreases.
- We have seen individuals behaving in the most irresponsible way when there is communal riot and law and order problem as it is felt by each member that the responsibility will be divided in case of any problem in the future.

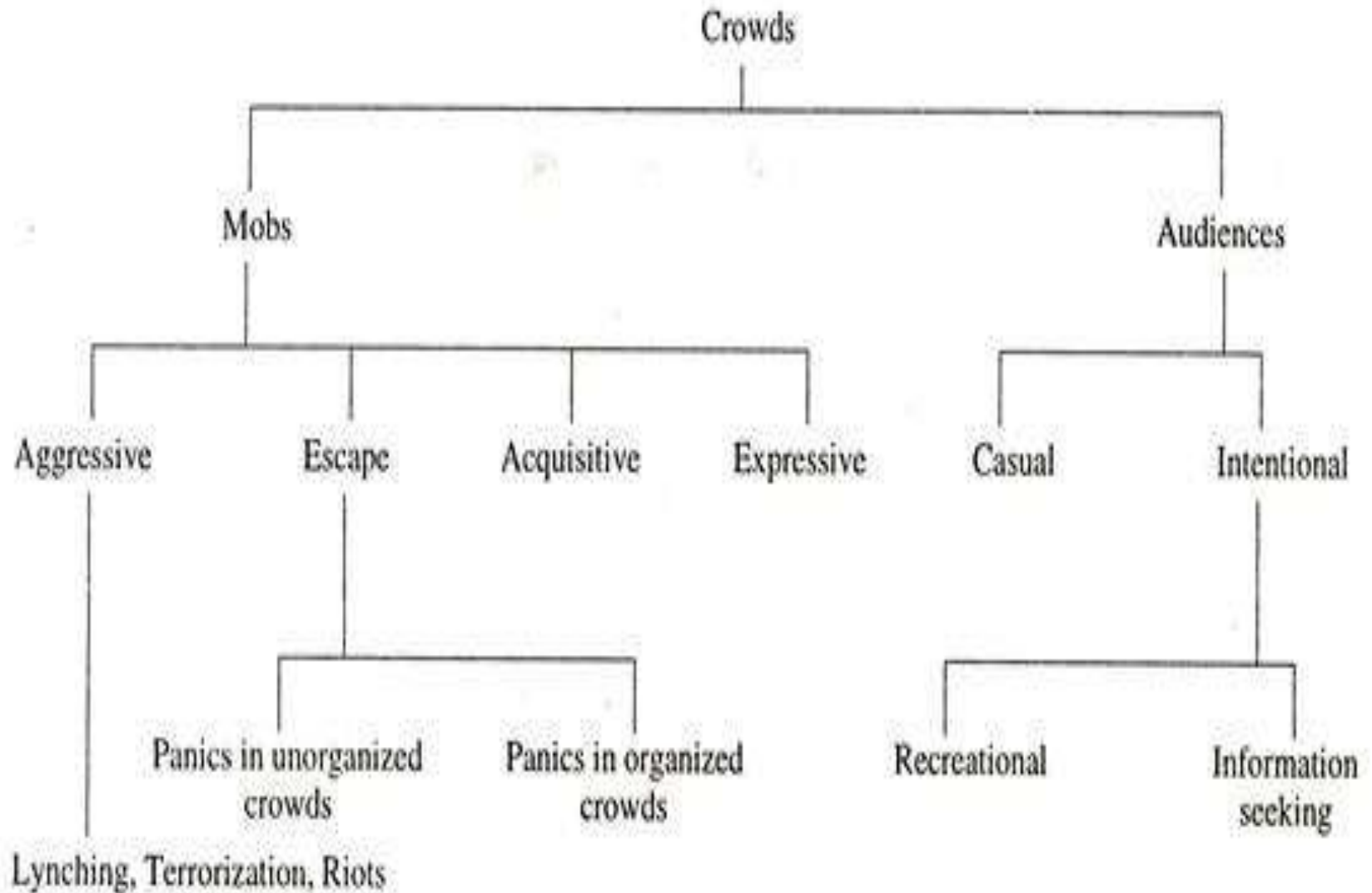
- **(xi) Sense of Power:**
- During action crowd or mob behaviour the members of the crowd are so much overwhelmed by the feeling of power that they feel as if they are above law and nobody can take any action against them for what they are doing.
- They feel that they are capable of doing anything to achieve this goal and nobody can stop them from doing it

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- **(xii) Sense of Anonymity:**
- The sense of anonymity plays a very vital role in an action crowd.
- Every member feels that it is the group as a whole which will be responsible for the indiscipline and illegal, immoral actions going against the social norms, moral and social values.
- If any problem arises in future, everybody will be subjected to it. This feeling decreases the sense of responsibility.
- Each person feels secure and thinks that he will not be detected, punished or penalized because so many people are showing similar behaviour.
- Interestingly, most of the people in a crowd usually do not know each other.

- **(xiii) Role of a Leader:**

- In a crowd, leader plays a very significant role. Particularly in mob, activity or action crowd the prestige, power and personality of the leader is very much demonstrated.
- The members of the crowd identify with the leader and behave according to the direction of the leader. Hence, the role of the leader is of tremendous importance in an action crowd.
- The leader suggests as well as directs. A crowd cannot operate unless there is a leader.
- When the leader disappears from a mob situation or goes underground, a new leader may emerge for the time being otherwise the crowd will definitely disintegrate.

Classification of Crowds:



- Brown has classified crowds into two types:
- **Active (mobs) crowd**
- **Passive crowd or the audience.**

- **Active Crowd or Mob:**
- People gathering in a musical function is a passive crowd. But, this passive crowd can turn to an active crowd or mob at any moment.
- Eg: power supply disturbed - turns to a mob where people start throwing chairs, tables on the dias, at other audiences, creating utter confusion and there is a lot of emotional reaction.

- On the other hand, a mob or an active crowd can turn to an audience or passive crowd when someone, may be the leader stands up to pacify the members or explains the purpose and aim for which the crowd has gathered.
- Thus, there is always a switch over from audience behaviour to mob behaviour and mob behaviour to audience behaviour

Action Crowd:

- In action crowd or a mob certain deep lying unconscious desires and emotions are released through action. Here love, fear, aggression and rage etc. emerge.
- **The action crowd can again be divided :**
- **(a) Aggressive mob**
- **(b) Panicky mob(Fear flight /Escape mob)**
- **C) Acquisitive mob**
- **d) Expressive mob**

- (a) Aggressive mob:-
- Aggressive & destructive frame of mind
- Capable of doing any kind of destructive, irrational, brutal actions
- Commit murder, rape, arson
- Deprived of morality & humanity

(b) Panicky mob(Fear flight /Escape mob)

- Fear stricken mob- individuals run in all directions to get out of the danger/save ones life
- Highly emotional & irrational
- On perceiving the danger panicky behaviour begins
- Danger is unanticipated
- Eg:-Fire in a theatre- people runs out

C) Acquisitive mob

- Mob wants to acquire something
- Eg:- Food shortage- food stampeded
- News of Bank closing

d) Expressive mob

- This is one in which participants gather together for self-stimulation. People who sing, dance and rejoice at a religious festival or carnival are examples.
- Blumer also term it 'dancing crowd'.
- He maintains that expressive crowds usually begin as conventionalized crowds, but as emotions become intense, the social organization guiding member behaviours become ineffectual.

Herbert Blumer's (1939) classification

- **1. The casual crowd:**
- It is an **aggregate of onlookers** viewing a common event, such as fire or an accident on the street or people gathered around a street fight or to listen to a street musician.
- Such crowds **have little unity, a very loose internal organization and a momentary existence.**
- **They are high in anonymity, but low in suggestibility, contagion and emotional arousal.**

2. The conventional crowd:

- **It consists of individuals pursuing a clear and mutual goal**, such as fans watching a cricket match in a stadium or attending a rally or concert or the passengers in a train.
- **Because the behaviour of participants in such crowds is more established and regularized, they are known as conventional crowd.**
- **They are expected to follow established social norms, and rules and procedures.** Nevertheless, a conventional crowd has all of the characteristics of crowd: it is proximate, temporary and focused on a single spot.

3. The expressive crowd:

- This is one in which participants gather together for self-stimulation. People who sing, dance and rejoice at a religious festival or carnival are examples.
- Blumer also term it '**dancing crowd**'. He maintains that expressive crowds usually begin as conventionalized crowds, but as emotions become intense, the social organization guiding member behaviours become ineffectual.

4. The active/action crowd:

- The gathering of crowds in intense situations always presents the possibility of action crowds of mobs and riots.
- Such crowds engage in direct action towards individuals and objects whereas casual and conventionalized crowds generally do not take part in the associated event.

AUDIENCE

- The audience is really a form of institutionalized crowd.
- The audience is less spontaneous. It is regulated in time and place.
- It is definite in purpose, and its organization limits the psychological effects produced.

features

- 1. Specific purpose
- 2. Pre- determined time & place
- 3. Standard form of polarization & interaction
- 4. Definite pattern of behaviour
- 5. Limited physical contact

TYPES OF AUDIENCE

- *1. The Information-seeking Audience:*
- The two most common information-seeking audiences are those of the public lecture and of the classroom.
- The public lecture may be of a very formal sort—the church service with the sermon as the core of the meeting, the scientific or literary lecture, or even political or economic addresses, in which propaganda often plays a distinct part.
- These audiences are usually selective in personnel.

2. *The Recreational Audience*

- The recreational audience is also controlled by a certain formal arrangement of time and place.
- Advertising often sets up anticipatory responses. The seats are usually arranged as they are in the informational lecture room.
- Unlike the classroom or public auditorium, the building has decorations which, like those of the church, direct the preliminary tuning of the audience.

Conversional audience

- Aim- exchange ideas & feelings with a view to
- Transform and convert people
- eg;- religious conversion programmes
- Political campaign

Pedestrian audience

- audience that collects causally by wayside
- eg: Around magician, fortune teller etc.

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THANK YOU