

# ORGANISATIONAL CONFLICT- NATURE& RESOLUTION

Sreeja K  
Assistant Professor,  
Department of Management Studies,  
New Horizon College, Bangalore, India.

**Abstract :** Organizational conflict is a widely discussed topic. It is important to understand the nature and causes of conflict and conflict resolution strategies used by organizations.

**IndexTerms-** Conflict, Causes, Resolution.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a term commonly having negative connotation, but organizations today are trying to understand the functionalities of conflict as not all conflicts are good or bad ( Abbas & Joshi, 2015). It is imperative to understand that if interpersonal conflicts are not handled appropriately, it can lead to bad feelings, high turnover and costly litigation (Hirschman, 2001). Hence, the importance of conflict management.

## II. CONFLICT- MEANING & DEFINITIONS

Conflict is an expressed struggle between at least two people who perceive the situation differently and are experiencing interference from the other person in achieving their goals.

Litterer (1966) defines conflict as “a type of behavior which occurs when two or more parties are in opposition or in battle as a result of a perceived relative deprivation from the activities of or interacting with another person or group”. Tedeschi et al. (1973) term conflict as “an interactive state in which the behaviors or goals of one actor are to some degree incompatible with the behaviors or goals of some other actor or actors”. Smith (1966) defines conflict as “a situation in which the conditions, practices, or goals for the different participants are inherently incompatible”. Conflict can be defined as the behavior by a person or group intended to inhibit the attainment of goals by another person or group (Gray & Starke, 1984).

Interpersonal conflict is considered to be one of the most difficult challenges organizational members face (Phillips and Cheston, 1979).

## III. NATURE OF CONFLICT

The conflict can be within an individual, between two individuals, or between two groups in an organization. Conflict may be cognitive or affective. Cognitive Conflict refers to differences in perspectives or judgments about issues. Affective conflict is emotional and directed at other people. Affective conflict is likely to be destructive because it can lead to anger, bitterness, goal displacement and poor decisions. Cognitive conflict can develop better ideas and solutions to problems.

Conflict under certain conditions is deemed as useful and acceptable within the organizations (A.M. Chaudhry and R. Asif, 2015). Conflict has the capacity to change important aspects of the organization, such as reward or resource allocation and administrative allocation. It's not only the existence of conflict that can lead to such alterations. It depends on the magnitude of the conflict that what type of changes will occur as a result of it and which areas will be influenced by it (Harolds & Wood, 2006). While conflict is generally perceived in negative manner, it can also be beneficial because it may cause an issue to be presented in different perspectives. Conflict has both positive and negative effects (Hotepo, Asokere, Abdul-Azeez, and Ajemunigbohun, 2010). Conflict might escalate and lead to nonproductive results, or conflict can be beneficially resolved and lead to quality final products (The Foundation Coalition, 2010). If organization manages conflict properly, it will bring catalyst for change and can have a positive impact on employee satisfaction and performance of the organization. Conversely, unmanaged conflict negatively impacts both employee satisfaction and job performance.

## IV. WHY CONFLICT ARISE ?

There are four levels of conflict in organizations:- 1) Individual level, 2) Interpersonal level, 3) Group level, 4) Organizational.

Organizational conflict arises due to :- Personal differences ( in terms of values, beliefs & goals), Information deficiency, Role incompatibility and Environmental stress.

Awan and Saeed (2015) found the following causes of conflict:-1) Poor communication / miscommunication, 2) Poor organizational structure, 3) Poor performance, 4) Repetitive negative behavior, 5) Strong negative misperceptions, 6) Perceived breach of faith & trust between individual, 7) Personality clashes / ego problem, 8) Differences in values, 9) Goal differences, 10) Unresolved

disagreement that was escalated to an emotional level, 11) Issues of wages and salaries, 12) Unfavorable government policies, 13) Lack of cordial relationship between labor and management

## V. CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

Sorenson and Hawkins (1995) described five styles of handling conflicts:-

- a. Integrating style, identified with problem solving, has high concern for self and others. It is associated with openness and exchange of information for the purpose.
- b. Obliging Style has high concern for others and low for self, it is related to emphasizing commonalities and playing down the differences to satisfy the concern of other party.
- c. An employee having Compromising Style acts to serve as intermediary in concern with self and others, which means a reciprocal relationship to make a mutually acceptable decision.
- d. Dominating style has high concern for self and low for others. This style is associated with forcing behavior to win one's position.
- e. Avoiding style is associated with pulling out or sidestepping from a situation and passing the buck. The peculiarity of this approach is low concern for others as well as for self.

According to Awan and Saeed (2015) following techniques are used by managers to resolve conflict:-

1) Improvement in communication, 2) Constant dialogue, 3) Accommodating, 4) Compromising, 5) Avoidance, 6) Solving the problem, 7) Re-orientation, 8) Dominating by force on other party

## CONCLUSION

Conflict in workplace is not a new topic for discussion. It will be there in every organization. The success of an organization depends on how effectively we resolve this workplace conflict.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Abbas & Joshi, (2013), A Descriptive Study of Workplace Conflict Management Styles in Indian Organizations, National Conference on Paradigm for Sustainable Business: People, Planet and Profit At: Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Roorkee
- [2] Abdul Ghafoor Awan and Sehar Saeed, Conflict Management and Organizational Performance: A Case Study of Askari Bank Ltd. (2015), Research Journal of Finance and Accounting www.iiste.org ISSN 2222-1697 (Paper) ISSN 2222-2847 (Online) Vol.6, No.11.
- [3] Hirschman, C. (2001). Order in the hear. HR Magazine. 46(7) p. 58-64.
- [4] Litterer, J. A. (1966). Conflict in organization: A reexamination. Academy of Management Journal. 9 p. 178-186.
- [5] Phillips, E., & Cheston, R. (1979). Conflict resolution: What works?. California Management Review. 21(4) p. 76-83.
- [6] Smith, C. G. (1966). A comparative analysis of some conditions and consequences of interorganizational conflict. Administrative Science Quarterly. 10 p. 504-529.
- [7] Tedeschi, J. T., Schlenker, B. R. & Bonoma, T. V. (1973). Conflict, power and games: The experimental study of interpersonal relations. Chicago: Aldine