UNIT 16 CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Objectives

After going through this unit you should be able to:

- define conflict
- differentiate between functional and dysfunctional conflict
- identify various causes of conflict in organizations
- identify various forms of conflict
- outline conflict process
- understand various approaches to deal with conflict

Structure

16.1 Introduction
16.2 Conflict: Functional or Dysfunctional
16.3 Conflicts: Types and Forms
16.4 Sources of Conflict
16.5 Conflict Process
16.6 Styles of Conflict Management
16.7 Summary
16.8 Self-Assessment Questions
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16.1 INTRODUCTION

Conflict is an inevitable part of personal, organizational and societal life. We all experience conflict of one kind or the others in our life, group organization and society. Conflicts arise due to competition, differences in values, attitudes, experiences, goals and perception of limited resources. For example, your spouse wants you to make a visit to your in-laws' place on coming Sunday and you have plans of organizing a picnic during same time with your office colleagues. You and your boss don't agree on the amount of budget the project requires or you and your colleagues have different ideas on how to implement new performance management system. Similarly, Pepsi and Coke are fighting to capture same customer base indulge into such advertising campaign that reflect their conflict. Interstate conflict on share water resources Kauvery water sharing dispute is well known between Tamilnadu and Karnataka and water sharing of Yamuna among Delhi, UP and Haryana. Similarly, conflict between India and Pakistan on Kashmir issue is well known. The scope of conflict resolution can be far and wide, we shall focus on interpersonal, group, intergroup, and organizational conflicts in this unit. To set the tone of the unit we would like to quote Professor Kelly(1970) "Perfect organizational health is not from freedom from conflict. On the contrary, if properly handled, conflicts can lead to more effective and appropriate adjustments".

There is no dearth of definition of conflict. The common theme in all definitions are two or more competing goals, ideas, attitudes, behaviours of one or more parties are perceived in disagreement and feeling of adversely affected interests. Taking these points, let us define conflict as a process where one party perceives
that another party has adversely affected or has tried to affect adversely something that the first party values.

This definition is quite broad and can explain all the interpersonal, intergroup, and interorganizational conflicts. For example, conflicts of egos between two colleagues can be explained in terms of the process where Colleague A values his self respect. Colleague B says something which is derogatory for A, then A perceives that B has adversely affected (by derogatory remarks) something that the first party values (Ego/self respect). Similarly, intergroup situation, if another colleague from different department has persuaded the CEO to divert the portion of budget from your department to his conflict situation arises. In this situation the act of persuading the CEO divert the portion of the budget of your department( which you valued) is an adverse action leading to conflict. Similarly, organizational and societal conflicts can also be explained.

16.2 CONFLICT: FUNCTIONAL OR DYSFUNCTIONAL

Conflicts are not always dysfunctional. In fact conflicts many times force people generate more acceptable and win-win solutions, thus in the process lead to creative solutions. In order to reduce tendency of conformity and stimulate creative thinking Tata Steel had released message on encourage dissent. However, if conflicts not handled properly may lead to latent hostility, frustration and poor performance. Thus managers need to encourage positive conflicts and prevent or manage negative conflicts.

Functional Conflict: It is healthy disagreement between two or more parties. In functional conflicts, people primarily differ on ideas or perceptions. If people are open minded they make joint exploration on ideas or principles, new awareness, new insight which improves the relationship between parties to disagreement. Functional conflicts lead to innovation and creativity, thus open possibility for high performance and organizational improvement. Typically, functional conflicts originate from cognitive or idea level difference rather than from affect .

Dysfunctional Conflict: It is unhealthy disagreement between two or more parties. Traditional view of conflict is more known for its dysfunctional nature. It presumes that conflicts are inherently bad and invariably affect the organizational outcome negatively. It involves anger, frustration, hostility, and antagonism among the parties and most often parties to the conflict engage in win-lose or lose-lose game.

Managers find it difficult to identify whether a conflict is functional or dysfunctional. DL Nelson and JC Quick (2000) suggest using following questions to diagnose as to whether a conflict is functional or dysfunctional:

- Are the parties to conflict hostile to each other?
- Is the outcome likely to be negative one for the organization?
- Do the potential losses of the parties exceed any potential gains?
- Is energy being diverted from goal accomplishment?

If the majority of these questions have yes as answers, then you are probably faced with dysfunctional conflict. Such conflict needs be resolved on urgent basis. If answers to these questions are negative, then you may be in the zone of functional conflict which you can choose to stimulate. Another situation when you as a manager would like to stimulate conflict is when group is in the process of groupthink and is not willing to examine various alternatives and its creativity has gone down.
Nelson and Quick (2000) identified following positive and negative consequences of conflicts:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Positive Consequences</th>
<th>Negative Consequences</th>
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<tr>
<td>Leads to new ideas</td>
<td>Diverts energy from work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulates creativity</td>
<td>Threatens psychological wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivates change</td>
<td>Wastes resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotes organizational vitality</td>
<td>Creates a negative climate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helps individuals and groups establish identities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serves as a safety valve to indicate problem behaviours</td>
<td>Can increase hostility and aggressive</td>
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16.3 CONFLICTS: TYPES AND FORMS

There are a number of classificatory schemes to group various types of conflicts. One we have already mentioned: functional versus dysfunctional conflicts. Similar classifications have been made by many researchers. For example: Haiman suggested intrinsic vs extrinsic conflicts. Extrinsic conflict has psychological and emotional content while intrinsic conflicts consists of rational, ideational, or intellectual contents. Resolving intrinsic conflicts requires analytical approach and skill while extrinsic conflict requires social tact and diplomacy.

Realistic vs Non-realistic Conflicts. Coser proposed this classification. Similar to Haiman's classification, realistic conflicts have rational, task or goal oriented confrontations whereas non-realistic conflicts are in noway related to goals or tasks of the group and organization. It consists of projected frustrations and emotions. For example, I have some problem or frustration at home and I decide to take it out on the group, thus non-realistic,

Substantive vs Affective Conflicts. Guetzko and Gyr proposed this classification. According to them substantive conflicts are task related conflicts whereas affective conflicts are related to socio-emotional or interpersonal relations issues.

Conflicts of both kind can occurs over various kind of issues. Morton and, Deutsch suggest five such issues:

1. Resources: control of money, property, space, power etc.
2. Preferences and nuisances
3. Value
4. Beliefs, and
5. Nature of relationship between parties

Deutsch also proposed six types of conflict which may occur across the issues any time and in combination.

1. Veridical Conflict. This type of conflict exists objectively and is perceived accurately. Honest but difficult difference of opinion.
2. Contingent Conflict. Conflict is resolvable but parties are not aware of it. A larger perspective helps
3. Displaced Conflict. The parties fail to identify real issue and argue over secondary issue
4. **Misattributed Conflict.** The assigning of wrong reasons, often unconsciously, to conflict.

5. **Latent Conflict.** A failure to consciously recognise that a true conflict exists

6. **False Conflict.** A conflict without basis caused by misunderstanding and poor communication

Robbins(2001) proposed a three fold classification of conflict:

1. **Task Conflict.** It relates to content and the goal of the work.

2. **Relationship Conflict.** It consists of interpersonal, emotional issues.

3. **Process Conflict.** It focuses on how the work gets done.

Robbins suggests low to moderate amount of task and process conflict is helpful for performance. However, relationship conflict invariably hinders group performance.

Conflicts on the basis of existence in various units can be classified in terms of interorganizational, intergroup, interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts. Prefix *inter* is used for depicting conflict "between" units or parties whereas the prefix *intro* is used to refer conflict "within" unit or party.

**Interorganizational Conflicts:** These are conflicts that arise between two or more organizations. There are numerous examples of interorganizational conflicts. These can be functional as well as dysfunctional conflicts. When organizations, due to competition enhance their quality, the same can be treated as functional conflict. However, if the same organizations are engaged in malicious campaign against each other, conflict will be termed as dysfunctional conflict.

**Intergroup Conflict:** When conflict occurs between two or more groups, departments, teams, the same is called intergroup conflict. When there is intergroup conflict, the groups become more cohesive, task focused and members show greater loyalty. However the outgroup i.e., the other group is seen as an enemy, hostility and obstructing behaviour is among members negatively affecting the interest of other group. It is therefore suggested that competition must be managed carefully, and competing groups should not lose sight of super ordinate goals of organizations.

**Interpersonal Conflict:** Conflict between two or more individual can be considered as interpersonal conflicts. Such conflicts may occur due to individual differences including differences in perception of problems, perception of situations, attitudes, values apart from differences arising out of control and allocation of resources.

**Intrapersonal Conflicts** When conflict occurs within a person, the same is called intrapersonal conflict. There are several types of intrapersonal conflict including interrole, intrarole, and person-role conflict. Role is a set of expectations put by others. Persons who are putting their expectations are called *role senders* and the person who is receiving set of expectations and is focus of attention is called *focal person*.

**Interrole conflict** can occur when a person is experiencing conflict due to competing demands in two roles. An employee may be a union leader and also executive in production department. Person’s role as executive expects him to be obedient to his boss and work diligently for the organization, however his role as a union leader is to raise issues with management to further the interest of their union. By playing the two roles the person experiences interrole conflict. **Intrarole conflict** can occur when the persons receives contradictory expectations in the same role. For example, manager suggests an employee to finish the project by tomorrow and also suggest to visit five clients personally today itself. It is virtually impossible to finish the
project by tomorrow if the employee complies to the other exoectation, i.e., visiting five clients personally today itself. This may generate intrapersonal conflict.

*Person-role conflict* occurs when a person is expected to do certain thing as a part of his/her role, which is against personal value system. For example, a person strongly feels about environmental pollution. She is asked to defend act of unguarded pollution of her company to the Government officials. Such expectation put her in the person-role conflict.

### 16.4 SOURCES OF CONFLICT

Conflicts arise from many sources. These sources of conflict can be classified in many ways. For example, personal and organizational sources or role, goal, resource and structural sources of conflict. Pareek has proposed seven main sources of interpersonal and intergroup conflict. The following table presents as to how parties perceive the sources of conflict under escalation and resolution mode.

The first source of conflict is selfish concern which generate narrow short term orientation. Parties are interested only in self-interest. This approach actually does not help the individual as the organization or group is likely to remain unless the parties to the conflict broaden their perspective and attain what Sheriff and Sheriff called ’super-ordinate goals’ but can not be attained by any one member/ party alone. Superordinate goals are those goals that are necessary for all members in the group. Superordinate goals can't be attained by one individual, it can be attained only by collective efforts of all members.

Some Potential Sources of Conflict and Perception of thirties in two different Modes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Potential Conflict</th>
<th>Perception under Conflict Escalation</th>
<th>Resultant Orientation</th>
<th>Perception under Conflict Prevention and Resolution</th>
<th>Resultant Orientation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concern for Self</td>
<td>Narrow (Own)</td>
<td>Short-term perspective</td>
<td>Broader</td>
<td>Long term Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different Goals</td>
<td>Conflicting</td>
<td>Individualistic</td>
<td>Complementary</td>
<td>Superordinatio n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Issues</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Fighting</td>
<td>Expandable</td>
<td>Sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Issues</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Lack of trust</td>
<td>Sharable</td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different Ideologies</td>
<td>Conflicting</td>
<td>Stereotyping</td>
<td>Varied</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varied Norms</td>
<td>Must be uniform,</td>
<td>Intolerance</td>
<td>Diverse and Evolved</td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>Dominance/Submission</td>
<td>Interdependent</td>
<td>Empathy and Cooperation</td>
</tr>
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</table>

When two members of the group are pursuing goals that are mutually exclusive conflict is bound to be there. If the outcome of conflict is very critical, person may develop individualistic orientation. Better way is to see things from wider perspective where multiple goals can be pursued simultaneously and goals can be developed that are complementary. For example some member may have power need, and pursuing the goal of influencing and persuading people where another person's need may be share his experiences with the group. The two goals apparently seems to be contradictory, but can be pursued simultaneously. One can
take gate keeping role to regulate group functioning while another member can find appropriate time to share his own experience with the group. Group also needs people who are ready to subordinate their personal goals for the group’s goal.

Resource sharing has been a perennial cause conflict within and between groups. It happens because members of the groups feel that resources are limited and they need to take control of resources to the exclusion of other member/group. In resolution mode, groups jointly act to expand the resources or at least agree to share resources. Such approach saves a lot of energy of the group normally wasted while fighting.

Power has also been source of conflict and people and groups perceive it to be limited. For example, the departmental headship is a position of power as the head takes all the decisions regarding resource allocation, rule formulation etc. Such exercise of power gives birth to conflict, frustration and hostility. Sharing of, power through various committees and participation may give the perception that power is sharable and resultant orientation will be trust.

Ideologies can be different but people can still decide to live peacefully. If people are too intolerant to opposite ideologies, people may react stereotypically towards persons of different ideology. If people work on preventative mode they recognise the diversity of the group and organization and try to interact with understanding instead of showing hostility.

Group norms may also be a cause of conflict. Many times one group is not tolerated by another because the two follow different norms. The dominant group most often tries trust its norms on the weaker group and advocates for uniform norms. This develops the orientation of intolerance. If groups are working in preventive/resolution mode they consider that groups can be autonomous and have their own norms and thus develop a sense of tolerance. Example, person from majority community if insist that minority community must follow its norms the orientation is intolerance. However, more sensible majority community members try to prevail upon members of their community to not to insist on minority community change its norms and thus develops sense of tolerance.

Relationship within and among groups may be a source of conflict. Some people/groups have tendency to dominate. Others are comfortable with dependence and hierarchical relationship. Similarly some people prefer to relate on equality basis and feel uncomfortable in hierarchical relationship. When relationship is an issue and one party wants to create dependence in other group, the resultant orientation is dominance by one and submission by another. Better way for dealing with situation is to see the relationship in terms of interdependence (A depends on B for fulfilling certain needs, similarly B depends on A for some other things). Such relationship develops appreciation for mutual need sand the resultant orientation is empathy and cooperation.

To summarise, if people are too much interested only in their own needs, want to their own goals at all costs, fight to capture available resources, distrust powerholders, stereotype people with different ideologies, show intolerance for different norms, and try to dominate other, conflict will surely escalate. On the other hand if people/groups see difference as opportunities to learn new things and prevent or resolve conflicts they will work for superordinate goals, realise that goal can be complementary and share resources with others, trust power holders respect different ideologies and try to understand varied norms and develop tolerance for the same, and relate with others empathically. If conflicts are to be resolved people need to take initiatives and risks.
There are many approaches in the literature to describe conflict process. One popular approach is proposed by Lois Pondy. He has proposed that conflict goes through five stage processes which he calls "conflict episodes". These stages are helpful in diagnosing task conflicts. If one can locate where is the group in the process, he/she can predict where it will go next and thus may try to find ways to manage conflict. The five stages are: Latent conflict, perceived conflict, felt conflict, manifest conflict and conflict aftermath.

1. **Latent conflict:** It is the stage in which factors exist in the situation/environment that may surface at any time. For example, limited resources are to be shared by many departments. Potential source of conflict is present in the situation. It can erupt any time.

2. **Perceived conflict:** At this stage people are aware that a conflict exists and the other party may frustrate one's goal directed behaviour. For example, if quality manager is heard saying that we need to be more careful in certifying product as we have received many complaints from dealer about quality of the product. Overhearing this conversation production manager may become aware that there is a conflict as our product has to pass stringent quality standards, thus may reduce the volume of production. Thus production manager sees the possibility of development of conflict between the two departments.

3. **Felt conflict:** Parties to the conflict are emotionally aware that there is a conflict and they experience stress anxiety, stress, and hostility. Managers of quality and production once called in GM's review meeting, they may feel the waves impending confrontations on production and quality issues and may prepare to state their stands on the conflict mentally.

4. **Manifest conflict:** At this stage open observable conflict is visible. Quality manager now communicates his concern to production manager regarding the quality. Production manager may react to the same by asking for specific data may or may not contribute to the usage obsolete technology. But the fact is that conflict has come into open.

5. **Conflict aftermath:** This is the fifth stage and ranges conflict resolution to group dissolution and group may return to stage one. This is the stage where conflict resolution is attempted and once conflict is some how resolved using various strategies, parties to the conflict reach to stage where they are still left with residual hostility which among other things become a reason for latent conflict in subsequent conflict episode.
Another five stage conflict resolution process is proposed by Donelson Forsyth which may be used to understand task as well as process conflict. Features of each stage is given below:

![Diagram of Conflict Resolution Process]

**Figure 2: Model of Conflict Resolution by Donelson Forsyth**

1. **Disagreement**: Differences surface. Minor ones are resolved. People state I have changed my views. Some less critical issues are deferred. Differences, perceived as real and substantive are acknowledged.

2. **Confrontation**: One or more members of the group when voice that they hold certain beliefs and values incompatible with that of other member and face clear opposition. Members may also differ on goals or on mechanism of sharing of resources. True conflict now exists. Debate happens. A commitment to respective position intensifies. Emotions get aroused. Communication becomes less rational. Calls are given to neutrals to commit themselves.

3. **Escalation**: In this stage conflict give birth to further conflicts. People become more aggressive. Trust is lost. Negative norms of reciprocity develops and forces an orientation "you will get what you give". An eye, for an eye slogan becomes favorite at this phase.

4. **De-escalation**: While fighting at escalation stage, parties drain lot of their energy. Emotions cool down. Some sense of rationality and understanding reemerges out of necessity. Group protection norm emerges. Trust may or may not develop depending on issue and intensity of disagreement. Negotiation, conciliation, or some kind of resolution may be initiated at this stage. Parties may agree to compromise or to look for broader perspective in the interest of the group. If nothing works third party may be invited for intervention. This intervention may be appropriate only when emotional intensity of the conflict has subsided parties are ready to listen.

5. **Resolution**: At this stage there is variety of activities in the group leading to resolution. Group may change its stand, or minority members are sacrificed in the interest of larger group. Members genuinely get persuaded. A fraction of the group may withdraw seeing the futility of its efforts. Leader may veto the decision and resolve the conflict. It may be resolved by votes. Negotiation and trading of favours may result in resolution.
16.6 STYLES OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Many frameworks are available to classify and present various styles of conflict management. Here we will discuss three frameworks: (1) Five styles: avoiding, forcing accommodating, compromising, and collaborating by Ruble and Thomas (Fig. 3), (Fig. 4) Contingency model of approach-avoidance mode conflict management, 2 and 3, Approach-avoidance mode of conflict management by Pareek (Fig. 5),

1. Five conflict management styles, Based on Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid model, five conflict management styles have been proposed. Two dimensions: concern for personal goals or assertiveness (the degree to which one party satisfies his/her own concerns) and concern for relationship (degree to which one tries to satisfy other party's concern) have been used to derive five styles: competing or forcing (low cooperativeness, high assertiveness), collaborating (high on assertiveness, high on cooperativeness), accommodating (low on assertiveness and high on cooperativeness), avoiding (low on both cooperativeness and assertiveness), and compromising (moderate on both cooperativeness and assertiveness). Forcing-When one party tries to satisfy his personal needs under all circumstances, the party forces his way and competes for satisfying his concern. Collaborating- When parties to the conflict are

Figure 3: Styles of Conflict Management

interested in long term and continued relationship and that concern of both parties should be met to the maximum extent, they decide collaborates. Avoiding-When a party is neither interested in his own goals nor interested in maintaining relationship with the party and knows that conflict exists, he simply withdraws and does not want to deal with conflict. Accommodating- Here person is more interested in maintaining good relationship, and thus puts other party's interest over and above his own, thus party sacrifices his interest to resolve conflict. Compromising- A situation where parties to the conflict are ready to listen to each other and willing to climb down from their initial expectation and sacrifice something for gaining peace. This often happens in trade union and management bargaining where trade union drop certain demands and management lowers initially set performance bar in return.

2. Contingency approach to conflict management. Derr proposed a contingency approach for choice conflict management strategies. He suggested three main
strategies of conflict management: power play, bargaining, and collaboration. He suggested that collaboration is best suited when relationship between the parties is of interdependent nature, cost of unresolved conflict is very high and organization supports the open expression of disagreements and working on the same.

Bargaining works fine when parties are interested in showing power and is used as a mechanism to allocate scarce resources and usually invoked for arriving at a formal agreement. Bargaining is also effective in the situations where parties to disagreement use either collaboration or power play and fail to arrive an agreement, bargain works for them as a middle path.

![Figure 4: Contingency Model of Conflict Management](image)

Power play is used to deal with conflicts through striking balance between competing forces. This strategy works well with people who are well versed in using power tactics.

Negotiation is the greatest weapon and used only when various processes have matured. It may not be always a desirable mode for resolving conflict. However, it is a constructive and approach mode of conflict management. Parties involved in conflict may consider to move towards negotiation mode eventually as negotiation recognises the power and willingness of both parties to resolve the problem in mutually beneficial way.

Two variables appear to influence choice of mode of influence of strategies. Integration of the ingroup and the criticality of the issue of conflict. If the group is not well integrated, negotiation may not be appropriate strategy to be used. If the group is internally divided the group conflict may further worsen under the threat of outgroup. A group would risk negotiation only when the issue of the conflict is very central to the group. Non-substantive issues may not get that much energy of the group. (Figure 4)

The two variables, integration of in group and criticality of the conflict may vary from low to high: As the two variables approach high, approach strategies of conflict management may become more relevant and eventually parties may move towards negotiation. Movement towards negotiation may be through compromise or through third party intervention who can facilitate the process of negotiation. Adoption of negotiation may be a gradual process and parties may take their own time to understand and proceed towards that.

**Pa reek’s Model of Conflict Management.** Uadi Pareek proposed a contingency model of conflict management strategies. This model again consists of avoidance approach mode to conflict management. In order to check your own preference to various conflict management strategy please do the following activity.
Activity 1

Before moving further please complete the following exercise.

What approach do you follow in managing conflicts? Below are 8 approaches. Rank them in terms of your own preference style of conflict management. Give rank 1 to the statement best describes your approach or style; 2 to the statement which is the next best description of your style and so on; thus the statement which is least true of your style will get rank 8.

a) Dialogue with conflicting party on the underlying problem and jointly search a mutually acceptable solution.

b) Workout your best solution for the conflict and fight your own way out to implement it.

c) Do nothing about the conflict, because no attempt usually help.

d) Use help of a third party for arbitration.

e) Allow some time to pass, hoping that things will cool down helping in solving the conflict.

f) Provide small concession to the party

g) Avoid most situations that are likely to lead to conflicts.

h) In the spirit of give and take, accept some demands made by other party in the exchange of some your own demands.

Pareek has proposed a model of conflict management based on three variables.

1. Mode of conflict management: Avoidance vs Approach mode

2. Reasonableness of the outgroup: Open to reason vs Unreasonable

3. Interest in peace: Interested in peace vs Belligerent
During the conflict situation ingroup and outgroup are addressed as we and they. Outgroup is considered to have interest opposed to ingroup and outgroup is also seen belligerent, then conflict seems to be inevitable, but if outgroup is perceived distracted or disinterested, conflict may not arise. Once conflict has surfaced, outgroup may be still perceived in two ways - open to reason (interested in listening, dialoguing and solving the problem) and unreasonable (not amenable to logic) thus a low probability of solution. A combination of three variables produces 8 styles of conflict management. (Figure 5) If we can determine where the parties/group is placed in the matrix of three variables, it can be predicted which style and mode of conflict management will be successful. Avoidance approach is based on fear result into defensive behaviour like rationalization, emotional displacement and anger. Approach mode is based on positive psychology characterised by effort to find solution with the help of others.

Four avoidance styles. Extreme avoidance of conflict happens when the out-group is belligerent and unreasonable, resultant approach is sense of helplessness. However if the out-group is perceived interested in power, avoidance takes place so that there is minimum opportunity for interaction. However, when out-group is perceived as open to reason, avoidance takes a positive form: withdrawal from the conflict. If both groups are interested in peace, they may suppress the conflict and hide hurt feelings and losses. In such situation, i.e, under avoidance mode, no conflicts get resolved.

Four approach Styles. Conflict management may vary from very aggressive approach to a very positive and constructive approach. If in-group perceives the out group both as opposed to its interest and unreasonable, in-group members fight for solution in their favour. Blake and Mouton called this 'win-lose trap'. This is where parties use confrontation style. If out-group is perceived as unreasonable but interested in peace, compromise is used. When out-group is perceived as belligerent but open to reason, arbitration or third party intervention is considered appropriate. When parties are reasonable, having their own interest, and keen to arrive a peaceful solution, negotiation will be the most appropriate strategy.

Result of Activity 1

Now you can find out what is your own preferred style of conflict management by scoring the statements you ranked in the activity I. Styles of the alternatives are as follows:

a) Negotiation  b) Confrontation  c) Resignation  d) Arbitration

e) Defusion  f) Appeasement  g) Withdrawal  h) Compromise

16.7 SUMMARY

The unit presented the concept of conflict. We dealt here with various kinds and classifications of conflict i.e., functional vs. dysfunctional conflict; task, relationship, and process conflict; substantive vs. affective conflict veridical, contingent, displaced, misattributed latent and false conflict; intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, and interorganizational conflicts. We also identified various sources of conflicts, concern for self, different goals, resource issues, power issues, ideological and norm related issues, and relationship issues. We discussed two framework of describing conflict process. Louis Pondy's framework included five stages namely, latent condition, perceived conflict, felt conflict, manifest conflict, and conflict aftermath. Donelson Forsorsyth's framework has also five stages disagreement, confrontation, escalation de-escalation and
resolution. The next section talked about three models of conflict management styles. The first model talks about five styles of conflict management: forcing, avoiding, accommodating, compromising and collaborating. The contingency model of conflict management by Derr talked that choice of conflict management styles would depend on ingroup integration and criticality of the conflict issue. Approach mode-negotiation can be approached via third party or via compromise. Pareek again proposed a contingency model consisting of eight styles based on avoidance-approach modes of conflict management, perception of outgroup terms of reasonableness and interest in peace. The four avoidance mode styles are: resignation, appeasement, withdrawal, and defusion. The four approach mode styles are: confrontation, compromise, arbitration, and negotiation.

16.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Define conflict. Discuss its advantages and disadvantages.

2. Distinguish between functional and dysfunctional conflict. How will you decide that particular conflict is functional or dysfunctional?

3. Discuss various stages of Pondy's Conflict process model?

4. What are various sources of conflict?

5. Explain various conflict management styles and their appropriateness.

6. Discuss contingency model of conflict management.

16.9 FURTHER READINGS


