Conflict Management: Need for Organization Effectiveness

BARKHA GUPTA
(UGC-NET/ MBA-HR/ PGDCA/ B Sc. (Microbiology)), INDIA

ABSTRACT
Conflict cannot be avoided since it is an inevitable aspect of work place. However, the results of conflict are not predetermined. Conflicts are normal in any organization because people have different opinions and among them, there are people who cannot accept other people's different opinions. Conflict as having the potential to yield positive as well as negative effects. Negative effect of conflict create hurdles for organization growth so to resolve this problem conflict management is a tool for increase the performance of organization and help to reach the organization to its desire position. This research paper show that how both type of conflict affect on organization and how conflict management strategies work for organization growth.

Keywords— Conflict, Conflict Management, Conflict Management Strategies, Positive and Negative conflict.

I. INTRODUCTION
Conflicts are part of human consciousness in all aspects of life. It is an inherent feature of human existence. It is even useful on occasion. It is difficult to conceive of a situation, which is conflict-free. Conflict is a neutral and natural occurrence. One cannot avoid conflict, whether at home, at the office, or when watching television news. Conflict can be constructive, and it can be destructive. The distinction comes in terms of how it is managed. What makes conflict positive or negative has to do with how it is managed by the people who are in conflict with each other. The complexity of conflict increases as organizations become more open and diverse. Conflict produces both positive and negative effects. Results indicated that they rated several negative effects significantly higher than any positive effects and it is dangerous for an organization to have too many conflicts. The fact that conflict exists, however, is not necessarily a bad thing: As long as it is resolved effectively, it can lead to personal and professional growth. By resolving conflict successfully, organization can solve many of the problems that it has brought to the surface, as well as getting benefits. However, if conflict is not handled effectively, the results can be damaging. To solve the conflict related problem in organization conflict management come into existence. When effective conflict management strategies used by the organization time to time that help to achieve personal and organization goal. Conflict resolution refers to dealing with or removing the cause of the conflict. In this paper conflict management will refer to strategies of containing (managing the conflict) as well as to strategies of resolving it.

II. DEFINITION
Conflict is a process of social interaction and a social situation, where interests and activities of participants (individuals or groups) actually, or apparently, confront, block and disable the realization of one party’s objectives (Jambrek, Penić, 2008, 1199).

Conflict is a process where person A deliberately makes an effort to prevent efforts of person B with an opposing action, which will result in frustrating Person B to achieve his goals or satisfy his interests (Robbins, 1995).

Organizational conflict occurs, as actors engage in activities that are incompatible with those of colleagues within their network, members of other organizations, or unaffiliated individuals who utilize the services or products of the organization (Rahim, 2002).

According to Lewis, French and Steane (1997), conflict within an organisation is inevitable. This is a consequence of boundaries arising within any organisational structure, creating separate groups that need to compete for scarce resources.

Appelbaum, Abdallah and Shapiro (1999) further builds on this by stating that conflict is a process of social interaction. It involves a struggle over claims to resources, power and status, beliefs, preferences and desires.

Darling and Walker (2001) link this idea to the organisation by stating that, even when conflict is a natural
phenomenon in social relations, it can nevertheless be managed within companies.

Conflict management is defined as “the opportunity to improve situations and strengthen relationships” (BCS, 2004).

III. OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

- This research paper help to know about how identify and understand conflict better.
- To know about positive and negative conflict and its effect on organization.
- To know about strategies that help to resolve conflict in organization.
- To know about conflict management need.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 CONFLICT

Conflict means to be in opposition to one another. Conflict may be defined as a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. Conflict on teams is inevitable; however, the results of conflict are not predetermined. Conflict might escalate and lead to nonproductive results, or conflict can be beneficially resolved and lead to quality final products. Therefore, learning to manage conflict is integral to a high-performance.

4.2 ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT

Organizational conflict is disagreement by individuals or groups within the organization, which can center on factors ranging from resource allocation and divisions of responsibility to the overall direction of the organization. A common example of organizational conflict occurs when workers advocate for higher pay and the business owner or management wants pay levels to remain the same.

4.3 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. The aim of conflict management is to enhance learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in organizational setting. Conflict management involves acquiring skills related to conflict resolution, self-awareness about conflict modes, conflict communication skills, and establishing a structure for management of conflict in your environment. According to Rahim (2002), if they are to be effective, conflict management strategies should satisfy certain criteria. First, conflict management strategies should be designed to improve organizational learning. Instead of dealing with conflict “within the existing structure and processes of an organization” (ibid.: 212), one should challenge the status quo by enabling organizational members to challenge the underlying policies, assumptions, and goals. Second, strategies should be designed to include “the right stakeholders to solve the right problems” (ibid.: 209).

V. HOW DO PEOPLE Respond TO CONFLICT? FIGHT OR FLIGHT?

Physiologically we respond to conflict in one of two ways—we want to “get away from the conflict” or we are ready to “take on anyone who comes our way.” Think for a moment about when you are in conflict. Do you want to leave or do you want to fight when a conflict presents itself? As we all know that every situation has two faces positive and negative and it depends upon the individuals how they react to the conflict. Conflict is simply defined as tension, which is neither good nor bad. Positive tension, that energy that leads to increased creativity, innovation and productivity, is a dynamic byproduct of two or more people sharing their views, even if their views are inconsistent or out of sync with each other. Negative tension is an unproductive, off-putting, harmful result of people not working together to arrive at a positive solution. Conflict can be positive because it is good to talk about the issues and problems as it leads to the growth and change of the company. It improves the decision-making process and increase movement towards goals. Conflicts in the workplace can have a positive impact on the worker performance. Conflicts aim at clarify and understand issues, resolve a problem, etc., at the end of the day a conflict is positive when both parties agree on something that is positive for the company. It helps to create energetic climate. Foster new ideas, alternatives and solutions.

Conflicts in the workplace can be negative because conflicts create tension and stress over the organization which have negative impacts on the employee performances. Conflict can negatively impact relationship and productivity of organization. Conflict does not favor communication and effective group work; it create diminish trust and support between the employees. That negative impact of conflict is the main hurdle of organization performance.

According to Hener, 2010, There are several approaches to types of organizational conflicts but for our analysis we will take a look at the following types:

Vertical conflicts occur because the supervisor is always telling an employee what to do and tries to ‘micro-manage’, while/although he/she should let the employee to do his/her job. This type of conflict exists in organizations where the organizational structure has a high degree of formality;

Horizontal conflicts occur between employees within the same department, i.e. on the same hierarchical level. These conflicts can manifest themselves for many reasons, such as the different interests/ideas related to distribution of resources;

Line Staff conflicts occur between support staff and line employees, within a department or an organization;
Role conflicts can stem from an incomplete or otherwise fallacious understanding of the assignment given to an employee at a specific moment in time.

VI. HOW TO IDENTIFY CAUSES OF CONFLICT IN ORGANIZATION-

According to Capozzoli (1995) there are seven causes of conflict: (1) Team members bring culturally diverse values to their work teams. (2) Team members have different attitudes that result in different goals for team members. (3) Team members have different needs that are not met, which result in frustration that exacerbates conflict. (4) Various expectations of the team members are not met and result in conflict. (5) Team members have different perceptions that result in different interpretations of the same information. (6) Limited resources often result in an increase in conflict. (7) Team members have different personalities that clash with each other.

In any organization, there are many causes of conflicts; however, conflicts within an individual usually arise when a person is uncertain about what task is expected to do, if not clearly defined by the supervisor or the person in charge. Furthermore, if the tasks of individuals working as a group are not clearly defined by the management they will lead to more conflicts. Conflicts between individuals may result from role-related pressures. Conflicts would arise between individuals and groups if the goals were not specified for individuals within a group.

VII. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ORGANISATION

"Develop your conflict resolution & management competence and become better prepared to effectively remedy workplace conflicts"

Conflict management is the principle that all conflicts cannot necessarily be resolved, but learning how to manage conflicts can decrease the odds of nonproductive escalation. Conflict management involves acquiring skills related to conflict resolution, self-awareness about conflict modes, conflict communication skills, and establishing a structure for management of conflict in your environment.

The International Association for Conflict Management was founded to encourage scholars and practitioners to develop and disseminate theory, research, and experience that is useful for understanding and improving conflict management in family, organizational, societal, and international settings.

IACM was founded in 1984. It is a membership-based organization of practitioners and university faculty & doctoral students from around the world. Activities include an annual conference, publication of the NCMR journal, as well as the Signal newsletter. There are currently 350 members.

According to a study 85% of US employees experience conflict and spent 28-hours/week dealing with it. It does happen in all the countries, conflict is everywhere in organization and for negative conflict it is very necessary to manage the conflict. Those organization members who receive training say it is the biggest driver for success.

How individual dealing with conflict show in this diagram

Conflict resolution started in the 1950s and 1960s. This was at the height of the Cold War, when the development of nuclear weapons and the conflict between the superpowers seemed to threaten human survival. A group of pioneers from different disciplines saw the value of studying conflict as a general phenomenon, with similar properties whether it occurs in international relations, domestic politics, industrial relations, communities or families or between individuals.

In the 1970s Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann identified five main strategies of dealing with conflict that vary in their degrees of cooperativeness and assertiveness. They argued that people typically have a preferred conflict resolution strategies. However they also noted that different styles were most useful in different situations. They developed the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) which helps you to identify which style you tend towards when conflict arises.
These Strategies are:

1. **Collaborating**
   **I win, you win**
   **Fundamental premise:** Teamwork and cooperation help everyone achieve their goals while also maintaining relationships
   **Strategic philosophy:** The process of working through differences will lead to creative solutions that will satisfy both parties' concerns
   **When to use:**
   - When there is a high level of trust
   - When you don't want to have full responsibility
   - When you want others to also have "ownership" of solutions
   - When the people involved are willing to change their thinking as more information is found and new options are suggested
   - When you need to work through animosity and hard feelings
   **Drawbacks:**
   - The process takes lots of time and energy
   - Some may take advantage of other people's trust and openness

2. **Compromising**
   **You bend, I bend**
   **Fundamental premise:** Winning something while losing a little is OK
   **Strategic philosophy:** Both ends are placed against the middle in an attempt to serve the "common good" while ensuring each person can maintain something of their original position
   **When to use:**
   - When people of equal status are equally committed to goals
   - When time can be saved by reaching intermediate settlements on individual parts of complex issues
   - When goals are moderately important
   **Drawbacks:**
   - Important values and long-term objectives can be derailed in the process
   - May not work if initial demands are too great
   - Can spawn cynicism, especially if there's no commitment to honor the compromise solutions

3. **Accommodating**
   **I lose, you win**
   **Fundamental premise:** Working toward a common purpose is more important than any of the peripheral concerns; the trauma of confronting differences may damage fragile relationships
   **Strategic philosophy:** Appease others by downplaying conflict, thus protecting the relationship
   **When to use:**
   - When an issue is not as important to you as it is to the other person
   - When you realize you are wrong
   - When you are willing to let others learn by mistake
   - When you know you cannot win
   - When it is not the right time and you would prefer to simply build credit for the future
   - When harmony is extremely important
   - When what the parties have in common is a good deal more important than their differences
   **Drawbacks:**
   - One's own ideas don't get attention
   - Credibility and influence can be lost

4. **Competing**
   **I win, you lose**
   **Fundamental premise:** Associates "winning" a conflict with competition
   **Strategic philosophy:** When goals are extremely important, one must sometimes use power to win
   **When to use:**
   - When you know you are right
   - When time is short and a quick decision is needed
   - When a strong personality is trying to steamroller you and you don't want to be taken advantage of
   - When you need to stand up for your rights
   **Drawbacks:**
   - Can escalate conflict
   - Losers may retaliate

5. **Avoiding**
   **No winners, no losers**
   **Fundamental premise:** This isn't the right time or place to address this issue
   **Strategic philosophy:** Avoids conflict by withdrawing, sidestepping, or postponing
   **When to use:**
   - When the conflict is small and relationships are at stake
   - When you're counting to ten to cool off
   - When more important issues are pressing and you feel you don't have time to deal with this particular one
• When you have no power and you see no chance of getting your concerns met
• When you are too emotionally involved and others around you can solve the conflict more successfully
• When more information is needed

**Drawbacks:**
• Important decisions may be made by default
• Postponing may make matters worse

**VIII. TIPS FOR MANAGING ORGNIZATIONAL CONFLICT EFFECTIVELY**

The consequences of poorly managed conflict are directly opposite the likely outcomes of conflict that is managed well. When conflict is managed poorly in a work environment, members of the team are likely to be less committed to the group and its decisions. People who work in environments where conflict isn't managed effectively tend to exhibit both low job satisfaction and reduced productivity. To avoid these situations in the organization, they should follow some points that help them to manage conflict effectively.

• Build good relationships before conflict occurs
• Do not let small problems escalate; deal with them as they arise
• Respect differences
• Listen to others’ perspectives on the conflict situation
• Acknowledge feelings before focusing on facts
• Focus on solving problems, not changing people
• If you can’t resolve the problem, turn to someone who can help
• Remember to adapt your style or strategies to the situation and persons involved

**IX. CONCLUSION**

Conflict is a characteristic of human existence. It is part of the dynamic of life that drives us into the future. But it needs to be managed constructively. When conflict is understood, it’s easier to find ways to predict it, prevent it, transform it, and resolve it. Research and personal experiences show us that, when we avoid conflict, the conflict actually escalates and our thoughts and feelings become more negative.

When we manage our conflicts more effectively, we use less energy on the burdensome tasks such as systemic conflict and get to spend more of our energy on our projects at work and building our relationships. This paper fulfills the objective of study; it shows that conflict management intervention can be utilized to deal with conflict at various organizational levels. Organizations should develop diverse but appropriate strategies to resolve and manage conflicts.

**REFERENCES**