

CONFLICT: CAUSES & CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES: A PSYCO – POLITICAL EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

Conflict resolution has immense importance and relevance in present scenario. As we know across the globe countries are facing number of conflicts - *social, economic, political, ethnic*, and many more types of conflicts are prevalent which needs a solution only then people can live a peaceful life without any fear. Conflict resolution is such a mechanism where conflicted parties come together and sort-out their incompatibilities and conflicts through peaceful means. It has been accepted by all stalwarts, academicians, civil society and prominent personalities of the world that war is the last option in politics which can only be interpreted as last resort; It has been rightly said – ‘*where diplomacy fails, war begins*’. Conflict resolution as a mechanism of peace building, peace-making and peace-keeping includes only peaceful methods and techniques for the maintenance of peace and security and to protect the succeeding generations from the scourge of war, because war has devastating repercussions and ramifications. Today many renowned universities of the world offers conflict resolution as an independent subject, and wide range of researches are being conducted in this area. Hence, conflict resolution can play a vital role to create awareness among people of the world that only in a peaceful world people can survive and develop themselves. World had seen the consequences of first and second world war now they don't want to see another war which would be more dangerous in terms of disaster, and annihilations, the world have not so many resources to overcome its debt. Therefore, conflict resolution mechanism and confidence building measures can be adopted as a check or prevention over conflicts and peace could be maintained in easy way without adhering to violence.

KEYWORDS: Conflict, disagreement, mediation, decision makers, violence, stress.

DEFINITION OF INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT

There is no ideal definition for interpersonal conflict. Different researchers have different views about “Interpersonal conflict” based on their research. The conflict is considered as a series of disagreement or incompatibility between opinions and principles ([Jehn & Bendersky, 2003](#)). People view it as interference or blocking behaviour. Others believe it as negative emotions, such as stress, anxiety, depression. Kellermann (1996) believed that interpersonal conflict can be simply described as a clash between two individuals who are unwillingly or unable to fulfil expectations of each other. Interpersonal conflict refers to the representation of incompatibility, disagreement, or difference between two or more interacting individuals (Rahim, 2001). Hocker & Wilmot (2007) in their book define interpersonal conflict as “An expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals”.

After reviewing some of the recent definitions of interpersonal conflict, it can be summarized as, Interpersonal conflict as an interaction of interdependent people who sense disagreement and opposing interests, incompatibility and the possibility of interference, and negative emotion from others and anger ([Bodtker & Jameson, 2001](#); [Pondy, 1967](#); [Thomas, 1992](#)). Some people believe that the conflict is the perception of different interests. It refers to the idea that involves the beliefs of different social entities (i.e., individual, group, organisation, etc.) who perceive incompatible goals and interference from others in achieving those goals ([Rahim, 2010](#); [Tjosvold, 1990](#)). According to Bercovitch, a situationists thinker defines conflict as a “situation which generates incompatible goals or values among different parties.” According to Lewis Coser an American sociologist defines conflict as the “Clash of values and interests, the tension between what is and what some groups feel ought to be.”

STRATEGIES FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict is inevitable. It is negative when it leads to violence, undermines the communication relationship between the parties involved in the conflict, stimulates people to become uncooperative, or prevents the parties from addressing real issues or problems. However, the conflict can be a positive creative force, when it increases communication, releases stored feelings, leads to the solution of problems, results in the growth of the relationship between parties in conflict, or improves performance. According to Floyd (2009), "Our choices almost always have an effect on our relationships". Most of us use conflict skills that we observed growing up unless we have made a conscious effort to change our conflict resolution style. Some of us observed good conflict resolution, while others observed faulty conflict resolution. Therefore, it is important to learn, and practice effective conflict resolution strategies. The conflict resolution strategy you chose to apply will influence your relationships with others. Conflict does not damage relationships, poor resolution of conflict does. Interpersonal conflict resolution is a permanent solution to the problem or dispute through dialogue, without physical or verbal violence.

NEGOTIATION

Negotiation refers to a strategic discussion that resolves an issue in a way that both parties find acceptable. In a negotiation, each party tries to persuade the other to agree with their point of view. Negotiations involve some give and take, which means one party will always come out on top of the negotiation. By negotiation, all involved parties try to avoid arguing but agree to reach some form of compromise. Negotiation is a discussion of two or more people with the goal of reaching an agreement. The first strategy that people can use during conflict is negotiation. Negotiation is an integral part of every human activity. More important for limitation of conflict is process of negotiation. The term negotiation could be taken to mean all the interactions, strategies, and face to face efforts to argue with and modify the position of an adversary.

Certain negotiation may require using overlapping styles to produce positive results.

Accommodating (I lose-you win). The focus of this style is to preserve relationships. It should be used when you are at fault, your position is weak, or you are unprepared. Make sure you know the consequences of conceding before you do so.

Avoiding (I lose-you lose). Use this style when the issue being negotiated is trivial or when the value of resolving the conflict outweighs the benefit. Set expectations by both parties when using this negotiation style.

Collaborating (I win-you win). This should be the primary negotiation style. It requires understanding the other party's point of view and motivations. Note that this style requires more time and may not work with competitive negotiators.

Competing (I win-you lose). This style often is used when relationships are not critical and one you need to get action quickly. During negotiations, use clear language (e.g., "we must have") rather than weaker language (e.g., "we would like").

Compromising (I lose/win some-you lose/win some). In this negotiation style, both parties value fair and equal resolution. Both parties can get fast results but it's also possible to concede to certain terms too early without regard for all aspects of the negotiation.

MEDIATION

Mediation is a process wherein the parties meet with a mutually selected impartial and neutral person who assists them in the negotiation of their differences. It is the process of talking to two separate people or groups involved in a disagreement to try to help them to agree or to find a solution for their problems. Filberg and Taylor define term Mediation, as the process by which participants come together then with the assistance of a neutral person or persons, systematically isolate disputed issues to develop options, consider alternatives and reach consensual settlement that will accommodate their needs. 3 Types of Mediation

- 1 . Evaluative mediators are known for their "no-nonsense" approach to resolution. They maintain most of the control throughout the mediation process, and they are the most vocal about each party's strengths and weaknesses.

Evaluative mediators are more likely to make recommendations based on their experiences. Evaluative mediation is most useful in a time crunch or when there is an uneven power dynamic, such as with divorces or corporate cases.

- 2 . Transformative mediators are the opposite of evaluative mediators. Instead of maintaining total control in the situation, transformative mediators support conflict resolution by giving control over to the involved parties.

By empowering each party, transformative mediators create the time and space for both sides to express their emotions, find common ground over personal issues, agree with one another, and heal and preserve their relationship.

This type of mediation works best when both parties are willing to work together to resolve the dispute.

- 3 . The most common type of mediation is facilitative. Facilitative mediation is a middle ground between the extremes of evaluative and transformative mediation. While the facilitative mediator maintains control of the process, both parties have control of the outcome.

Facilitative mediators use both evaluative and transformative techniques, such as asking questions, offering perspectives, and providing policy and procedure support to both parties. There is much less evaluation involved, and agency is given back to those involved.

ARBITRATION

Arbitration describes a scenario in which a conflict is resolved by a third party who is neutral and emotionally uninvolved in the situation. The arbitrator is given power by the individuals involved in the dispute to make decisions. The arbitrator will look at both sides and make decisions based on their neutral judgments. This is a commonly used practice in legal disagreements as an alternative to the lengthy and expensive process of going to court. Goldberg describes arbitration as often voluntary, final, and binding. Arbitration in other words means, settlement of dispute by the award of a tribunal which gives effect to existing laws, and which binds the parties.

ADJUDICATION

Adjudication is the final decision in a legal case. It can be the finding of guilt, civil liability, or a term of imprisonment (sentence to be served). Once a final decision has been made on a case, it is considered adjudicated. It can also refer to a not guilty verdict if the case has gone through the entire legal process. One way psychology can help inform adjudication is by offering a window into cognitive processes that operate below the level of consciousness, even among judges. One psychological phenomenon is “motivated cognition” — a human tendency to reason toward preferred outcomes by perceiving, interpreting, or evaluating information in a biased manner, without realizing one is doing so. Even when seeking to do nothing other than faithfully apply the law, legal decision makers may be susceptible to motivated cognition because “the more extensive [cognitive] processing caused by accuracy goals may facilitate the construction of justifications for desired conclusions.”

BARGAINING

The process in which two parties attempt to resolve their conflicting interests by trading resources in return for some benefits. Bargaining is a process of reaching a mutually acceptable solution among all parties.

Distributive Bargaining Strategy – each party has a target point and a resistance point. The target point is what the parties would like to achieve which most of the time is entirely or extremely opposite. The resistant point is the minimum result which would be acceptable by the parties. The tactics focus on trying to get one’s opponent to agree to one’s specific target point or to get as close as possible. Examples of such tactics is persuasion.

Integrative Bargaining Strategy – results in a long-term relationship or bond and facilitates working together in the future.

PERSUASION

Persuasion is a process in which one person or entity tries to influence another person or group of people to change their beliefs or behaviours. Persuasion can be a powerful force that affects the decisions and actions that people take. Persuasive messages are symbolic (using words, images, and sounds) and may be transmitted verbally or nonverbally, face to face communication.

Social psychologists recognize six characteristics of persuasion, originally identified by Robert Cialdini, PhD, in 1984, that are powerful and effective no matter what the cultural context. Use them to help persuade people, but also recognize their use by others who may be leading you towards a decision or convincing you to adopt a particular perspective.

1. Reciprocity - Reciprocation recognizes that people feel indebted to those who do something for them or give them a gift. For marketers, Cialdini says: "The implication is you must go first. Give something: give information, give free samples, give a positive experience to people and they will want to give you something in return."
2. Scarcity - Scarcity relates to supply and demand. Basically, the less there is of something, the more valuable it is. The more rare and uncommon a thing, the more people want it.
3. Authority - People respect authority. They want to follow the lead of real experts. Giving the appearance of authority actually increases the likelihood that others will comply with requests – even if their authority is illegitimate.
4. Commitment and consistency - People do not like to back out of deals. We are more likely to do something after we have agreed to it verbally or in writing, Cialdini says. People strive for consistency in their commitments. They also prefer to follow pre-existing attitudes, values, and actions. -
5. Consensus/Social proof - When people are uncertain about a course of action, they tend to look to those around them to guide their decisions and actions. They especially want to know what everyone else is doing – especially their peers.
6. Liking - "People prefer to say 'yes' to those they know and like," Cialdini says. People are also more likely to favour those who are physically attractive, like themselves, or who give them compliments. Even something as 'random' as having the same name as your prospects can increase your chances of making a sale.

COMMUNICATION

Communication can be seen as a means of how to deal with and resolve conflict constructively. It is generally understood as the exchange and discussion of ideas, where ideas are presented honestly and gently leading to harmony and interrelatedness. However, misunderstanding is the main cause of conflict. Therefore, the success of a communication must establish re- harmonization of the relations that enable parties to arrive at an understanding of the best of the conflict.

RE - CONCILIATION

Reconciliation is both a goal – something to achieve and a process – a means to achieve the goal. It is a long-term process. There are no quick- fix to reconciliation. It takes time, and it takes its own time, it's pace cannot be dictated. It is a deep process which involves coming with term with an imperfect reality which demands change in our attitude, our aspirations, our emotions and feelings, perhaps even our beliefs. Such profound change is a vast and often painful challenge and cannot be rushed or imposed. Reconciliation is an important initiative for eliminating the mistrust and hatred which spark the recurrence of conflict, achieving the consolidation of peace, and enabling the realization of a sustainable peace.

Galtung (1998) refers to reconciliation as "a theme with deep psychological, sociological, theological, philosophical and profoundly human roots - and nobody really knows how to do it." According to Galtung (1998) a Truth & Reconciliation model incorporates victims, perpetrators as well as the state since it represents the institution responsible for the condition it offers to its citizen. Following Galtung (1998), the model should be based on three pillars: • Victim-Perpetrator: forgiveness for apology, restitution [and truth] •Perpetrator-State: truth in return for amnesty • State-Victim: restitution in return for closure.

In more specific terms, reconciliation can be seen as dealing with three specific paradoxes. First, in an overall sense, reconciliation promotes an encounter between the open expression of the painful past, on the one hand, and the search for the articulation of long-term, interdependent future, on the other hand. Second, reconciliation provides a place for truth and mercy to meet, where concerns for exposing what has happened and for letting go in favor of renewed relationship are validated and embraced. Third, reconciliation recognizes the need to give time and place to both justice and peace, where redressing the wrong is held together with the envisioning of a common, connected future.

COOPERATION

The colloquial definition of cooperation is “an act or instance of working or acting together for a common purpose or benefit: joint action. This cooperation includes both behavioural and instrumental components. The behavioural component is that people are working or acting together, while the instrumental component involves a common purpose or benefit for those involved. Therefore, cooperation is an occurrence involving two or more people who share an activity for the purpose of achieving a goal that benefits all of those involved. Cooperation is often defined as a goal structure that includes 1. Cooperation in which achieving one’s goal is dependent on other people’s achieving their goal 2. Competition, which requires that to achieve one’s goal others must not achieve their goals 3. Individualism, in which attaining one’s goal is not dependent on whether others attain their goals. (Deutsch 1949)

John Burton argues that all social conflicts emerge from the scarcity of resources. According to him resources are of two types: Material resources and non-Material resources. He terms the later one as „social goods“ by social goods he means status, dignity, recognition, reverence, and all human rights. People have differential access to material goods. So, scarcity is a reality in relation to this. Whereas social goods potentially are never in short supply. The point is given the natural dictum that Human’s as social beings out to live together which is possible only through willing consideration of others as equals, the problem of sharing scarce resources can be rectified only by the means of cooperation.

Cooperative styles are characterized by:

1. "Effective communication" where ideas are verbalized, group members pay attention to one another and accept their ideas and are influenced by them. These groups have less problems communicating with and understanding others.
2. "Friendliness, helpfulness, and less obstructiveness" is expressed in conversations. Members tend to be generally more satisfied with the group and its solutions as well as being impressed by the contributions of other group members.
3. "Coordination of effort, division of labour, orientation to task achievement, orderliness in discussion, and high productivity" tend to exist in cooperative groups.
4. "Feeling of agreement with the ideas of others and a sense of basic similarity in beliefs and values, as well as confidence in one's own ideas and in the value that other members attach to those ideas, are obtained in cooperative groups."
5. "Willingness to enhance the other's power " to achieve the other's goals increases. As other's capabilities are strengthened in a cooperative relationship, you are strengthened and vice versa.
6. "Defining conflicting interests as a mutual problem to be solved by cooperative effort facilitates recognizing the legitimacy of each other's interests and the necessity to search for a solution responsive to the needs of all." This tends to limit the scope of conflicting interests and keep attempts to influence each other to decent forms of persuasion.

ENCAPSULATION

Some conflicts are not going away, and focusing on resolution may be counter-productive. How does one live with an on-going conflict? In *Staying with Conflict*, Bernie Mayer introduces the concept of ‘encapsulating conflict’. This is the practice of choosing when to engage in a conflict, while at other times reducing its presence and influence on one’s life. Encapsulation is curbing the range of expression of conflict. It is “a procedure in which conflict parties agree on certain rules and parameters and avoid certain of the more extreme forms of conflict.” It refers to the process by which conflicts are modified in such a way that they become limited by rules (the capsule)

Encapsulating conflict is supported by three particular attitudes and beliefs.

1. A premises that the conflict is likely to be lasting
2. It rests on the belief that progress can be made from engaging in conflict and therefore it is worthwhile to put time and energy into the engagement.
3. A belief that the quality of engagement can be improved through cooperative practices.

CONCLUSION

Conflict is a normal situation to happen as it is the human nature. Most conflicting situations are generated by different perspectives that polarize losing their potential. A little amount of contrast is useful and even good sign but when it turn into conflict you experience direct and indirect verbal or physical violence. Conflict resolution is an umbrella term for a whole range of methods and approaches for dealing with conflicts, from negotiation to diplomacy, from mediation to arbitration, from facilitation to adjudication, from conciliation to conflict keeping prevention, from conflict management to conflict transformation, from restorative justice to peace. In today's so called democratic world, conflict could only be solved through the peaceful methods and through peaceful techniques, as we know war is regarded as the last option or resort to sort-out the conflict. Without going to war conflicted parties can choose the process of negotiation, cooperation, diplomacy, reconciliation, summits and overall confidence building measures for the solution or for the transformation of the different conflicts. Successful conflict resolution depends on your ability to:

- Manage stress while remaining alert and calm. By staying calm, you can accurately read and interpret verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Control your emotions and behaviour. When you're in control of your emotions, you can communicate your needs without threatening, frightening, or punishing others.
- Pay attention to the feelings being expressed as well as the spoken words of others.
- Be aware of and respectful of differences. By avoiding disrespectful words and actions, you can resolve the problem faster.

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