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**ABM MODULE - B**

**Chapter 15: Conflict Management and Negotiation**

**(PART-I)**

**What we will study?**

**\*What is Conflict?**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Given the fact that people with different backgrounds in terms of their attitudes, behaviours, traits, desires, needs, etc., are constantly making inroads into the organizations to work together, conflicts are bound to occur and they cannot be avoided.

**Conflict can be expressed in numerous ways such as insults, noncooperation, bullying and anger.**

Its causes can range from personality clashes and misunderstood communication to organizational mismanagement.

The negative effects of workplace conflict can include **work disruptions, decreased productivity, project failure, absenteeism and termination.**

Emotional stress can be both a cause and an effect of workplace conflict.

As the organizations aspire to be peaceful entities for their business development and success, conflict should be ably managed and resolved, if cannot be avoided altogether.

With tensions and anxieties at an all-time high due to the current complexities and different ideological discussions at workplace, the chances for workplace conflict have increased.

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Conflicts can also arise among the workforce on the premise of misplaced prejudices which are attributable to interpersonal relations, competition at work and due to individual difference of opinions, etc.

**Our offices are our first homes as we spend the maximum time at workplaces only.**

One has to respect his organization to get respect in return.

Learn to keep a control on your emotions at workplace.

Never fight at the workplace as it spoils the decorum of the office.

**You might not agree to the other person but that doesn't mean you will start fighting with him.**

Sit with him and try to find out a solution, Conflicts spoil the ambience of offices and also lead to negativity all around.

Always respect other individual's opinion.

**Nobody wins in a conflict and nothing productive comes out of it.**

When two individuals fight with each other, they are actually wasting their precious time and as they say **"Time and Tide wait for none"**.

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**Avoid fighting at workplace as it leads to wastage of precious time which could have been otherwise invested in other productive work.**

**Remember your office pays you for your work and not for fighting with each other.**

**Employees tend to lose their concentration and focus in work if they are engaged in conflicts.**

**Individuals lose interest in their jobs leading to zero output.**

**They invest all their energies in fighting with each other and as a result the goals of the organization are never met.**

**No organization can survive if the targets are not achieved.**

**Never shout at your workplace, always lower your voice and try to adopt a middle path approach rather than arguing.**

**The crucial step in handling workplace conflict belongs, in most cases, to focus on the employees who are at odds with one another and to be suitably relocated them to other jobs which are physically distinct.**

**The employer's role - exercised by managers and HR professionals is significant, however, and is grounded in the development of a workplace culture designed to prevent conflict among employees to the extent possible.**

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**The basis for such a culture is strong employee relations viz., fairness, trust and mutual respect at all levels.**

**While conflict at workplace in any organizations will have adverse effects impending the business immensely; it is more harmful especially in service organizations like Banks which are the custodians of public money.**

**It is, therefore, more essential to focus on the conflict management as a part of one of their business and administrative roles and to assign such functions to able executives who can handle them with required **skill, ability, caliber and strategy.****

**In order to give required impetus to this aspect, the performance of the concerned executive in terms of better handling of this function should also be prescribed as one of the **Key Performance Indicators** and should suitably reflect in their performance appraisal system.**

### **CONFLICT: CONCEPT & DEFINITION:**

**'Conflict' may appear to be a sense of anxiety for most of the people but truly speaking, it is a **normal part** of any **healthy relationship.****

**It is part of the human experience.**

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Conflict occurs when individuals or groups are not obtaining what they need or want and are seeking their own **self-interest**.

Conflict is nothing more than a sharp disagreement or opposition of interests or ideas.

**Whenever two individuals opinion in different ways, a conflict arises.**

In a layman's language conflict is nothing but a fight either between two individuals or among group members.

No two individuals can think alike and there is definitely a difference in their thought process as well as their understanding.

Disagreements among individuals lead to conflicts and fights.

Conflict arises whenever individuals have different values, opinions, needs, interests and are unable to find a middle way.

As per the **Oxford Learners Dictionary**, Conflict is a situation in which people, groups or countries disagree strongly or are involved in a serious argument.

**McLean (2005)** defines Conflict as the physical or psychological struggle associated with the perception of opposing incompatible goals, desires, demands, wants or needs.

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Conflict is defined as a clash between individuals arising out of a difference in thought process, attitudes, understanding, interests, requirements and even sometimes perceptions.

A conflict results in heated arguments, physical abuses and definitely loss of peace and harmony.

**A conflict can actually change relationships.**

Friends can become foes as a result of conflict.

Conflicts are natural for a person or a group of individuals.

They can happen within the family or with the friends for any person.

**Conflicts are also possible at the workplace.**

After all, two people can't be expected to agree on everything, all the time.

The key is not to fear or try to avoid conflict but to learn how to resolve it in a healthy way.

When relationships pass through some conflict, good collaboration is required.

**The way, we handle the Conflict influences, reinforces or destroys the relationship.**

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Hence, Conflict is a good opportunity for clarification of doubts and misconceptions leading to healthy growth of the relationship, either in family and or at workplace.

**However, Conflict is a complex concept.**

Subject experts, psychologists, sociologists or human relations specialists, all of them differ in their idea of Conflict.

Some of them define it as a natural phenomenon, some generalise it as an obstructive behaviour, few of them feel that it is an excuse for goal incompatibility.

**There are many sources of conflict.**

Sometimes Conflicts happens unconsciously when the individual is not aware of the needs and starts reacting.

But in most of the cases, the individual is conscious of his rights and needs and knowingly reacts to achieve the goal.

Conflict can harm a relationship, if it is mismanaged, but when handled in a respectful, positive way, conflict provides an opportunity to strengthen the bond between two people.

It would always be better to identify conflict at an early stage and make sincere efforts to resolve it at the earliest.

Learning, a few skills to manage Conflicts, can help to resolve differences in a healthy manner and build strong relationships.



## **Conflicts at the Workplace**

At any workplace, where a number of people are working together, Conflict is a normal and natural occurrence.

Workplace conflict tends to lower the team morale and increase absenteeism, which normally results in the decrease in productivity.

Conflict also leads to disruption of desirable state of harmony and stability in an organization.

In simple words, Conflict at the workplace, is the struggle that happens when people feel they have incompatible goals, wants, demands or needs.

**It causes a massive degree of frustration, pain, discomfort, sadness as well as anger.**

It has been estimated that managers spend at least 25% of their time resolving workplace conflicts.

The most common response to any situation of conflict is the **flight-or-fight response**, some prefer run away or avoid the situation at all costs and others prefer to battle it out.

**In either case, people feel uncomfortable and dissatisfied with the outcome because no resolution is achieved.**

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Conflict is inevitable at the workplace, but it can be managed by handling of disagreements, misunderstandings and struggles.

**An open mind and a positive approach, definitely makes it easier to manage any Conflict, when it occurs.**

Conflicts lead to disrespect and unnecessary tensions organizations.

Individuals talk ill about others and spoil the environment.

You might be an excellent performer, a diligent worker, but if you keep on fighting with your fellow workers, you would definitely earn a bad name.

You will be in the limelight but for all the wrong reasons.

It is always wise to do your work sincerely, pack your bags, go home and come fresh the next day.

**Nobody loves to carry unnecessary tensions, thus it is always advised not to fight at workplaces.**

It is not always that you will agree to what the other person has to say, but fighting will not provide you any solution, instead it would add on to your tensions.

**Learn to compromise and discuss with your team.**

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**Listen carefully what the other person has to say and do correct him in a polite way, if he is wrong.**

**Avoid finding faults unnecessarily and criticizing your colleague.**

**Remember everyone at the office is a part of one big family working together towards a common goal.**

**Conflicts at workplace must be avoided and employees must concentrate on achieving their goals.**

**Give your best in each and every thing you do.**

**Enter your office with a calm and composed mind and never be hyper or react to anyone's statements.**

**Always think before you speak.**

**Adopt a professional approach at workplace and try to sort out your differences with your fellow workers.**

**Respect everyone at office and remember fighting is not the only solution.**

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**ABM MODULE - B**

**Chapter 15: Conflict Management and Negotiation**

**(PART-II)**

**What we will study?**

- \*What are the characteristics of Conflict?**
- \*What are different types of Conflict?**

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### **CHARACTERISTICS OF CONFLICT:**

**Hocker and Wilmot** have offered several principles on Conflict.

**Such principles are:**

**Conflict is universal.**

**Conflict is associated with incompatible goals.**

**Conflict is associated with scarce resources.**

**Conflict is associated with interference.**

**Conflict is not a sign of a poor relationship.**

**Conflict cannot be avoided.**

**Conflict cannot always be resolved.**

**Conflict is not always bad.**

**Main characteristics of Conflict are summarized as under:**

#### **1. Conflict involves opposition:**

**Conflict is a normal part of any healthy relationship.**

**After all, any person or a group of people cannot be expected to agree on everything, all the time.**

**When an individual or a group of individuals is in disagreement with the other, it leads to Conflict.**

**Thus, conflict takes its course only when opposition is there.**

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### **2. A conflict is more than just a disagreement:**

Conflict is not only a disagreement but it is a situation in which one or both the parties perceive a threat.

The threat is may be real or just an imagination.

### **3. Response to Conflicts is based on perceptions:**

Normally, the response to Conflicts is not an objective review of the facts.

It is based on the perceptions of the situation, which are influenced by the life-experiences, cultures, values and beliefs of the concerned person or the group.

### **4. Conflict is inevitable:**

Conflicts are part of all relationships between individuals who work together.

Conflict is internal discord that occurs because of a difference in ideas, values or perceptions or in the interpretation of a situation.

In the world of today, organizations hire employees from diverse geographical locations with dissimilar cultural and intellectual backgrounds, as well as various viewpoints.

**People of various backgrounds and different work styles are brought together to work for a shared business purpose.**

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In such a working environment where people have disparate outlooks toward the same problems, disagreements are bound to happen and workplace conflict is inevitable.

### **5. Conflict will always remain among humans:**

Conflict is an inevitable and unavoidable element of our personal and professional lives and one should not try to avoid it.

There is a proverb that says, 'if you always see two friends smiling all the time, it shows that they haven't been telling each other the truth.'

Since there will always be differences between human due to the compatibility factor, Conflict will continue to stay in life for everyone.

### **6. Conflict cannot be avoided:**

Two or more people or groups are different in educational level, family background, organisational training, etc., so conflicts cannot be avoided.

Sometimes the end goal can make parties evolve stronger and better.

**7. Conflicts are an opportunity for growth:**

Conflicts, once resolved, help to build trust among one-another.

**They give confidence and strength to believe that relationship can survive challenges and disagreements.**

Many times, Conflict can also be called a **process** because it begins with one party perceiving the other to oppose or negatively affect its interests and ends with competing, collaborating, compromising or avoiding.

By going through the above characteristics of conflict, it is clear that Conflict is not a strange thing for people.

**It is a normal life aspect.**

It exists in the minds of the people who are party to it.

Human beings experience it in their **day-to-day** lives with their friends, families and also in their professional lives.

**Only thing is that they need to be resolved with timeliness and with due precision.**



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### **Are Conflicts Bad and/or Undesirable?**

**There are three viewpoints:**

1- 'Traditionalists believe that Conflict is bad and should be avoided'.

2- 'Human relations experts feel that Conflict is natural.

It provides an avenue to know the opinions and also, an opportunity for creativity and persuasion.

Thus, it calls for an open approach to Conflict'.

3- 'Integrationists view Conflict as inevitable and helpful.

Conflict is viewed as a positive force except that when it is misdiagnosed, mismanaged or improperly avoided'.

The only key to Conflict resolution is its proper diagnosis and resolution.

### **TYPES OF CONFLICTS:**

Organizational conflict is disagreement between groups or employees regarding **work-related issues**.

The **three main types** of conflict that we find in the workplace are related to **task**, **relationship** and **values**.

**(a) Task Conflict:**

Task conflict involves differences based on work details and goals.

**Task conflict is related to the concrete issues related to employees' duties and expectations at work.**

It also includes assignments given to employees and also disputes about sharing of resources, differences of opinion on procedures and policies and in some cases, even interpretation of facts.

This is the easiest type of conflict to solve, and usually excellent communication and employee debate find the remedy for the problem. **It requires active listening.**

Task conflict can cause good discussion within an organisation and can help to streamline the productivity channels.

The best way to resolve task conflict is to engage the involved parties in a collaborative problem-solving process.

**Solutions are possible through some brainstorming also and outcome is not required to be imposed on them.**

Both the parties find out solutions together.

**Thus, they are more likely to create better working environment in the future.**

**(b) Relationship Conflict:**

Relationship conflict is a type of personal conflict that develops over disagreements and differences between individuals or groups.

This type of conflict is over personal issues and not work-related.

Due to its peculiar nature, this type of conflict can be the most difficult to diffuse and resolve in an organization.

Relationship conflicts can be long lasting and hurt overall employee job commitment, productivity, trust and work performance.

**Relationship conflicts arise from differences in personality, style, taste and even working styles.**

Such conflicts can be resolved by listening to the other person's point of view and demonstrating empathy and interest on the other person.

**(c) Value Conflict:**

Value conflict arises from fundamental differences in the life experiences, cultures, identities, values and beliefs.

**This can include even differences in politics, religion, ethics, norms, etc.**

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Disputes about values can also arise in the context of work decisions and policies also.

According to MIT professor, **Lawrence Susskind**, disputes involving values tend to heighten defensiveness, distrust and alienation.

Parties can feel so strongly about standing by their values that they can take extreme steps, adversely affecting the organization.

**Susskind** recommends that instead of seeking to resolve a **values-based** dispute, we aim to move beyond demonization toward mutual understanding and respect through dialogue.

The aim should be a cognitive understanding in which you and your co-worker reach an accurate conceptualization of one **another's** point of view.

This type of understanding doesn't require sympathy or emotional connection, only a "values-neutral" ability to describe accurately what someone else believes about the situation, write *Robert Mnookin, Scott R. Peppet, and Andrew S. Tulumello* in *"Beyond Winning: Negotiating to Create Value in Deals and Disputes"* (**Harvard University Press, 2004**).

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### **Intra-individual/Intra-personal Conflict:**

Conflicts can also arise **intra-personal**, where an individual's objective and vision differ from **his/her** company's overall vision.

This refers to a conflict within an individual.

Conflict can be **Intra-individual** conflict arises from frustration, numerous roles that demand equal attention but is it always possible to devote, and goals having both negative and positive aspects.

In sum, there can be 3 types of **Intra-individual/Intra-personal Conflict which are:**

- 1- Goal conflict.
- 2- Conflict from frustration.
- 3- Role conflict.

#### **(i) Goal conflict:**

Another common source of conflict for an individual is a goal that has both positive and negative features or two or more competing goals.

Goal conflict is more complex than conflict from frustration.

Goal conflict occurs when the attainment of one goal excludes the possibility of attaining another.

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**3 major forms of goal conflict may be distinguished:**

**Approach-Approach conflict**, where the individual is motivated to approach two or more positive but mutually exclusive goals.

**Approach-Avoidance conflict**, where the individual is motivated to approach a goal and at the same time is motivated to avoid it.

The single goal contains both positive and negative characteristics for the individual.

**Avoidance-Avoidance conflict**, where the individual is motivated to avoid two or more negative but mutually exclusive goals.

### **(ii) Conflict from frustration:**

Frustration occurs when a motivated drive is blocked before a person reaches the desired goal.

**An individual driven by an inner state of deficiency engages himself in some actions to fulfill the deficiency.**

But his attempts to reach the goal are checked by barriers which may be overt (**external**) or covert (**internal**).

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External barriers include floods, power failures, and the breakdown of transportation. These are **non-social**.

There are external barriers that are **social** - they are parents forcing a child to sit on the toilet, making him refrain from the cartoon, making him stay in the room, or denying him the pleasure of watching television.

Internal barriers are personal limitations and disabilities which thwart one's aspirations, weaknesses, physical deformities, lack of skill, or low intelligence may stand in the way of achievement.

**Internal barriers are more lasting than external ones.**

The frustrated individuals adopt any of four defense mechanisms: **aggression, withdrawal, fixation, or compromise.**

Aggression refers to the attack of the barrier, physical or symbolically.

**Withdrawal refers to backing away from the barrier.**

Fixation refers to the continuation of efforts to break the barrier.

**Compromise refers to the search for a new goal.**

**(iii) Role conflict:**

The final reason for the intra-personal conflict is the need of an individual to play several roles simultaneously but finding time and resources inadequate to do so.

For example, it is not uncommon for an adult middle-class male to be simultaneously playing the roles of husband, father, son to elderly parents, worker or manager, student (evening MBA program), member of social club, coach of a little league baseball team, bridge partner, poker club member, officer of a community group, and weekend golfer.

**Women of course also have numerous often conflicting roles.**

Although all the roles that men and women bring into the organization are relevant to their behavior, in the study of organizational behavior the organizational role is the most important.

Roles such as digital equipment operator, clerk, team leader, salesperson, engineer, systems analyst, department head, vice president, and chairperson of the board often carry conflicting demands and expectations.

There is recent research evidence that such conflict can harm well being and performance and may be affected by the cultural difference.



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**There are 3 major types of role conflict.**

**One type is the conflict between the person and the role.**

**There may be a conflict between the person's personality and the expectations of the role.**

**A second type is an intra-role conflict created by contradictory expectations about how a given role should be played.**

**Finally, inter role conflict results from the differing requirements of two or more roles that must be played at the same time.**

**Work roles and non-work roles are often in such conflict.**

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**Chapter 15: Conflict Management and Negotiation**

**(PART-III)**

**What we will study?**

**\*What are the reasons of conflict?**

**\*What are the different phases of conflict?**

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### **REASONS FOR CONFLICT:**

Misunderstandings, lack of communication, disagreement, etc., are an integral part of the work culture but the problem is that when it escalates, it leads to conflict that often hampers the efficiency and productivity level of a company and its employees.

Conflict arises from differences, both large and small.

It occurs whenever people in an organization disagree over their values, motivations, perceptions, ideas or even desires.

Sometimes these differences appear trivial, but when a conflict triggers strong feelings, a deep personal need is often at the core of the problem.

These needs can range from the need to feel safe and secure or respected and valued, to the need for greater closeness and intimacy.

Conflict can also be motivated by ego.

Solutions are selfishly sought with little regard for the other person.

The conflict becomes a **"win/lose"** situation in which one person **"wins"** at someone **else's** expense.

The **one-sidedness** of this **"solution"** increases the odds of more conflict.

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**"Losers" will defy, test, resist and retaliate against the "winners."**

When the employees in an organization are over-stressed, it has a direct impact on the working of the organization.

Hence, it is important to know about the common causes of conflict in the workplace and take viable steps to avoid them at all costs.

**Some of the common reasons for Conflict in an organization may be:**

### **1. Resistance to change:**

In this fast-changing working environment, there is a fear of the unknown amongst the employees.

It is a fact that the workforce is afraid of the management and does not see their ability to manage a change.

**It results in the resistance that employees show to change in their workplace.**

They want to stick with a familiar path.

This resistance to change results in disbelief, denial and workplace conflict between the management and employees.

Computerization in the Banks led to conflicts at various levels in the Banking industry in the initial stages.

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It is the responsibility of the management to guide its employees through the process of change to avoid workplace conflict.

Each and every employee should be made to understand the reasons behind the change and how the change can make a new beginning for them.

### **2. Work habits:**

A few work habits of the employees can be a cause of conflict in the workplace.

Habits like being extra diligent in work and keep on rechecking the file may also become a cause for conflict.

**Counseling and better communication can be helpful to come up with a viable solution to resolve such conflict.**

Talking freely and frankly with the concerned person or group can be of great help in identifying poor work habits, bringing improvement in this area and thus, bringing about a positive change.

### **3. Poor communication:**

Different communication styles can lead to misunderstandings between employees and supervisors or managers.

Lack of communication with team members and managers drives conflict underground.

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Open communication is essential in every organization so that the employees are kept informed and update.

**This also gives the employees much-needed opportunity to clarify doubts.**

Such conflict can be avoided by sharing precise and clear information, listen actively and managing verbal and non-verbal behavior.

### **4. Personality clashes:**

All work environments are made up of differing personalities.

Team members and managers should understand and accept each other's approach to work and problem-solving.

**In the absence of such understanding, conflict may occur.**

Normally, people with different backgrounds, cultures, preferences, experiences, temperament and capabilities work together under one roof in an organization.

When behavioral preferences like attitudes, values, skills, goals and perceptions of one party is incompatible with another party's preferences, sometimes these differences in their personalities becomes the cause of conflict amongst the employees.

It is the responsibility of the managers to resolve such conflicts.

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Managers should consider the viewpoints of both parties in case of workplace conflict. Only then, they can resolve such conflicts.

### **5. Poor performance:**

When one or more employees within an organisation are not performing well or are not meeting their potential and the issue is not addressed, conflict is inevitable.

Organizations should ensure that the employees get necessary and proper training to enhance their knowledge and skills to enable them to perform better.

### **6. Poor supervision:**

Sometimes, the managers or supervisors are incompetent at their job and are not smart enough to manage.

They play a biased role and listen to only one side of the conversation.

This leads to conflict.

Managers should become better supervisors to avoid such conflicts in the workplace.

## **7. Other reasons:**

Conflicts may also be caused by any one or more of the following reasons:

**Economics:** Insufficient remuneration to employees.

**Stress** from working conditions such as functional situations.

**Weak Leadership:** When the leader/manager is less qualified and/or having less experience than the team members/employees.

**Poor Organisational Structure** and Lack of Teamwork.

**Status:** When senior position is needed for status and a “wrong” person is promoted.

**Power struggle:** When everyone wants to be a leader and nobody wants to be a follower.

**Incongruence:** An employee is required to do something that is beyond his/her liking or interests.

**Lack of transparency** at the management level.

All the above factors cause dissatisfaction, sometimes leading to conflicts.

It is important to pay proper attention towards these causes and take preventive measures before it can irritate the employee or the team and lead to conflict.



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### **DIFFERENT PHASES OF CONFLICT:**

Basically, a Conflict can have **five phases**, which are as under:

#### **1. Prelude Phase:**

It involves all the factors which possibly cause a conflict among individuals.

Lack of coordination, differences in interests, dissimilarity in cultural, religion, educational background, etc., are vital aspects in arousing a conflict.

#### **2. Triggering Phase:**

No conflict can arise on its own. There has to be an event which triggers the conflict.

To illustrate, Ram and Rahim never got along well with each other.

They were from different cultural backgrounds, a very strong factor for possibility of a conflict.

Rahim was in the midst of a presentation when Ram stood up and criticised him for the lack of relevant content in his presentation, thus triggering the conflict between them.

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### **3. Initiation Phase:**

Initiation phase is actually the phase when the conflict has already begun.

Heated arguments, abuses, verbal disagreements are all warning alarms which indicate that the fight is already on.

### **4. Differentiation Phase:**

It is the phase when the individuals voice out their differences against each other.

The reasons for the conflict are raised in the differentiation phase.

### **5. Resolution Phase:**

A Conflict leads to nowhere and as such, individuals must try to reconcile and compromise to some extent and resolve the conflict soon.

The resolution phase explores the various options to resolve the conflict. Conflicts and fighting with each other never lead to a conclusion.

If you are not on the same line as the other individual, never fight, instead try your level best to sort out your differences.

Conversation and discussion is always a better and wiser way to adopt rather than continue with conflicts.

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**Chapter 15: Conflict Management and Negotiation**

**(PART-IV)**

**What we will study?**

**\*What are methods for conflict resolution?**

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### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION:**

Conflict triggers strong emotions and can lead to hurt feelings, disappointment and discomfort.

When handled in an unhealthy manner, it can cause irreparable rifts, resentments and disputes.

But when conflict is resolved in a healthy way, it increases the understanding of the other person, builds trust, strengthens relationships and thus, helps to increase productivity.

The key to manage conflict is not to fear or try to avoid conflict but to learn how to resolve it in a healthy way.

It is the duty of the management to resolve the same.

Resolution of conflict is not an easy job.

Resolving conflict in a positive manner is a skill that can be developed and practiced.

By resolving conflict constructively, an organization can turn a potentially destructive situation into an opportunity for growth, creativity and enhanced performance.

**Now the question is - what style or method should be followed to resolve a conflict?**

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Well, the easiest three step formula is:

**1. Listen**

**2. Talk**

**3. Resolve**

Let us see how well this formula works.

### **1. Listen:**

Being heard can be one of the most important goals of someone engaged in conflict.

Knowing how to listen and deploy appropriate communication tactics is determinative of whether a conflict will have a positive or negative resolution.

Hence, active listening skills are important when dealing with conflict.

### **2. Talk:**

Clear and open communication is the cornerstone of successful conflict resolution.

Appropriate communication tactics are required when dealing with conflict.

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### **3. Resolve**

The previous two steps are basically aimed at the resolution of the conflict.

Hence, it is expected that after listening to the parties concerned and having detailed discussions with them, the conflict will get resolved.

#### **According to the team of Helpguide.org:**

The following process of resolving conflict can ensure positive results to deal with the issue:

#### **(i) Listen for what is felt as well as said:**

When you really listen, you connect more deeply to your own needs and emotions, and to those of other people.

Listening also strengthens, informs and makes it easier for others to hear you when it's your turn to speak.

#### **(ii) Make conflict resolution the priority rather than winning or being right:**

Maintaining and strengthening the relationship, rather than **"winning"** the argument, should always be your first priority.

Be respectful of the other person and their viewpoint.

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### **(iii) Focus on the present:**

If you're holding on to grudges based on past conflicts, your ability to see the reality of the current situation will be impaired.

Rather than looking to the past and assigning blame, focus on what you can do in the **here-and-now** to solve the problem.

### **(iv) Pick your battles:**

Conflicts can be draining, so it's important to consider whether the issue is really worth your time and energy.

Maybe you don't want to surrender a parking space, if you've been circling for **15 minutes**, but if there are dozens of empty spots, arguing over a single space isn't worth it.

### **(v) Be willing to forgive:**

Resolving conflict is impossible if you're unwilling or unable to forgive others. Resolution lies in releasing the urge to punish, which can serve only to deplete and drain your life.

### **(vi) Agree to disagree:**

If you can't come to an agreement, agree to disagree. **It takes two people to keep an argument going.** If a conflict is going nowhere, you can choose to disengage and move on.

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### **The Thomas-Kilmann Model:**

This model identifies **five different approaches** to resolving conflict.

These approaches include:

#### **(a) Avoiding:**

Someone, who uses a strategy of "**avoiding**" tries to ignore or sidestep the conflict, hoping it will get resolved itself in course of time or dissolve soon.

#### **(b) Accommodating:**

Using the strategy of "**accommodating**" to resolve conflict involves taking steps to satisfy the other party's concerns or demands at the expense of your own needs or desires.

#### **(c) Compromising:**

The strategy of "**compromising**" helps in finding an acceptable resolution that will partly, but not entirely, satisfy the concerns of all parties involved.

#### **(d) Competing:**

The conflict resolution strategy of "**competing**" tries to satisfy the desires of the manager at the expense of the other parties involved.



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### **(e) Collaborating:**

**"Collaborating"** involves finding a solution that entirely satisfies the concerns of all involved parties.

The Thomas-Kilmann model identifies **two dimensions** people fall into when choosing a conflict resolution strategy: assertiveness and cooperativeness (**cooperation**).

**Assertiveness** involves taking action to satisfy your own needs, while **cooperativeness** involves taking action to satisfy the other's needs.

Each of the conflict resolution strategies discussed above, involves different degrees of assertiveness and cooperation.

For example, while accommodating includes a high degree of cooperation and a low degree of assertiveness, competing consists of a low degree of cooperation and a high degree of assertiveness.

Conflict resolution can take various forms, even passive kinds, such as avoidance of the issue when one person allows the other to make the ultimate decision, according to web resource "**MBA Toolbox**".

Learning how to resolve conflicts efficiently is a necessary skill for anyone in management.

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**ABM MODULE - B**

**Chapter 15: Conflict Management and Negotiation**

**(PART-V)**

**What we will study?**

- \*What are the five steps in conflict resolution process?**
- \*All about conflict Management?**

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The conflict resolution process can be framed in five steps as under:

### Step 1: Find out the source of the conflict:

The more **information** you have about the cause of the **conflict**, the more easily you can help to resolve it.

To get the **information** you need, use a series of **questions** to identify the **cause**, like,

"Why are you so upset?"

"Do you see a relationship between that and this incident?"

"How did this incident begin?"

As a manager or **supervisor**, you need to give both parties the chance to **share** their side of the story.

It will give you a better understanding of the situation, as well as demonstrate your impartiality.

As you listen to each **side**, acknowledge the **information** and **encourage** them to **continue** to open up to you.

### Step 2: Look beyond:

Often, it is not the **situation** but the point of view of the individual that causes **anger** to fester and **ultimately** leads to a conflict.

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The source of the **conflict** might be a minor issue that **occurred** months before, but the level of **stress** has grown to the point where the two parties have begun **attacking** each other **personally** instead of **addressing** the real problem.

During the **conversation**, you can get **them** to look beyond the triggering **incident** to see the real cause.

Once **again**, probing questions will help, like,

**"What do you think happened here?" or**

**"When do you think the problem between you first arose?"**

### **Step 3: Take suggestions for solution:**

After getting each **party's viewpoint**, the next step is to get them to identify how the **situation** could be **changed**.

Again, question the **parties** to solicit their ideas:

**"How can you make things better between you?"**

As a **manager**, you have to listen **actively**, aware of every verbal **nuance**, as well as a good reader of body **language**.

You want to get the **disputants** to stop **fighting** and start **cooperating**, and that means **steering** the **discussion** away from finger **pointing** and toward ways of resolving the conflict.

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### Step 4: Identify acceptable solutions:

You are **listening** for the most **acceptable** course of action.

Point out the merits of various **ideas**, not only from each **other's perspective**, but in terms of the **benefits** to the organization.

For **instance**, you might suggest the need for **cooperation** to effectively **address** the issue.

### Step 5: Final agreement:

The manager needs to get the two parties to accept one of the alternatives identified in Step 4.

The goal is to reach a mutually accepted agreement.

Some **managers** go as far as to write up a **contract** in which actions and timeframes are specified.

**However**, it may be sufficient to **meet** with the **individuals** and convey them the **solution** politely.

The above **five** step conflict **resolution** process may work between **groups** as well as **individuals**.

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### CONFLICT MANAGEMENT:

In most **conflicts**, neither party is right or **wrong**; **instead**, different **perceptions** collide to create **disagreement**.

Conflict is natural and it's up to the **organization** to respond to conflict **situations** quickly and **professionally**.

Conflict can be very **positive**, if one deals with it openly.

Thus, he/she can strengthen the **organization** by correcting problems.

Conflicting views give a **chance** to learn more about the **people**, explore views of others and **develop** productive relationships.

Managing conflict is an area of **human skills** that is necessary because human beings constitute and manage an organization.

Conflict management is a **fundamental** requirement for an **organization** as it not only helps in resolving the **conflict** but also enables them to take **preventive** measures to reduce conflict in the **organization**.

**Hence**, every organization is **required** to establish a conflict **management** process.

Studies are **going** on for a long time to find **suitable** means and ways to manage **conflicts**.

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Many styles of conflict **management** behaviors have been developed.

**Mary Parker Follett** described them as **domination**, **compromise** and integration.

This style involves **openness**, exchanging **information**, looking for **alternatives** and **examining** differences to solve the problem in a manner that is acceptable to both parties.

**Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton have presented five styles:**

Forcing, withdrawing, smoothing, compromising and problem solving.

**However**, no such conflict **management** behavior has been found to be **perfectly** applicable in all **situations**.

The only good part of these **styles** is that when **organizations** take required **measures** to address the **issues**, they will be able to keep their **differences** from rising to major **problems**.

Conflict **management** is the **approach** and **strategy** geared towards achieving a positive **outcome** and resolution amongst the parties **involved** in matters relating to conflicts.

These **strategies** and **approaches** are dependent on the type of conflict that exist in such **organizations**.

Conflict **management** must aim at **minimizing** affective conflicts at all **levels**.

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### How to Minimize Conflicts?

No manager should avoid a **conflict**, hoping it will go **away**.

It would be better to ask the **participants** to describe specific actions they **want** the other party to take.

It would be beneficial to have a third party (**meaning a non-direct superior with access to the situation**) involved.

**Finally**, it is advisable not to meet **separately** with people in conflict.

### A manager should take following actions to minimize conflicts:

#### Regular Review of Job Descriptions:

With the pace of change, the job **description** must also change.

But this will be **possible** only when the job **descriptions** are regularly **reviewed**.

#### Establish Rapport or relationships and build Relationship with all your Subordinates:

For stablishing **rapport**, meet them at regular **intervals**; ask them about their **achievements**, **problems**, and challenges.



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### Regular Reports:

A manager must get **progress** report about his **subordinates** **regularly**, indicating **achievements**, current needs and future scenario.

### Training:

Every manager **needs** to be provided training in **interpersonal communication**, conflict **management** and delegation of authority.

### Mutual Development of Procedures:

For routine **tasks**, the procedures **should** be developed keeping in mind the **inputs** received from **employees**.

If **possible**, encourage them to **share** their views in writing.

Such written **procedures** should be **distributed** to all concerned.

If need **be**, concerned **employees** be trained in those **procedures**.

### Holding Regular Meetings:

The **managers** need to hold regular **management** meetings to inform **subordinates** about new **initiatives** to be taken and the progress of current grammes.

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### **Suggestion Box:**

Consider such a **box** in which **employees** can provide **suggestions**.

An honest and **practical** Conflict **Management** Policy with a **transparent** process may be useful to **manage** conflicts in an organization.

**The following aspects need to be taken due care while framing such a Policy and finalizing a Conflict Management Process:**

### **Acknowledge that a difficult situation may exist:**

Honest and clear **communication** play an important role in both **Conflict management** and the **process** of its **resolution**.

Acquaint yourself with **what's** happening and be open about the **problem**.

### **Allow individual express their feelings:**

Some feelings of **anger and/or hurt** usually **accompany** conflict situations.

These **emotions** should be allowed to **expressed** and **acknowledged** to avoid conflicts.

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### **Understand and define the problem:**

What is the stated problem?

What is the negative impact on the work or relationships?

Are differing personality styles part of the problem?

Meet with employees separately at first and question them about the situation.

### **Determine underlying need:**

The goal of conflict **resolution** is not to decide which person is right or **wrong**; the goal is to reach a **solution** that everyone can live with.

Looking first for **needs**, rather than **solutions**, is a powerful tool for Conflict **management**.

To discover **needs**, you must try to find out why people want the solutions they initially **proposed**.

Once you **understand** the **advantages** their solutions have for **them**, you have **discovered** their needs.

### **Find common areas of agreement, no matter how small:**

- Agree on the problem
- Agree on the procedure to follow
- Agree on worst fears

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- Agree on some small change to give an experience of success

### **Find solutions to satisfy needs:**

- Solve the problem by generating multiple alternatives.
- Determine which actions will be taken.
- Make sure involved parties agree to the proposed actions.
- Total silence may be a sign of passive resistance.
- Be sure you get real agreement from everyone.

### **Follow-up to monitor actions:**

You may **want** to schedule a **follow-up** meeting in one or two weeks to **determine** how the **parties** are doing.

### **Decide what to do if the conflict remains unresolved:**

If the conflict is causing a **disruption** in the **department/unit** of the **organization** and it remains **unresolved**, you may need to explore other **avenues**.

An outside **facilitator** or an expert may be able to offer other insights on solving the **problem**.

In some **cases**, the conflict becomes a **performance** issue and may become a topic for coaching **sessions**, performance **appraisals** or **disciplinary** action.

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**ABM MODULE - B**

**Chapter 15: Conflict Management and Negotiation**

**(PART-VI)**

**What we will study?**

**\*What are the Negotiation skills needed for conflict resolution?**

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### NEGOTIATION SKILLS FOR RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS:

**Negotiation** is useful when two **individuals** have a similar objective in **mind** but both of them **conflict** on how the objective is reached.

Conflict **resolution** is a way to quell these **conflicts** and ensure the objective is met.

**Hence**, conflict resolution is an imperative tool in having productive **negotiation** periods that **ensure** that the objective will be met.

Conflict can involve issues of **power** and **authority**.

Adults may resort to **threats** and **punishments** to solve **problems** with children.

**Labour unions** may strike and **management** may respond by laying off workers.

These are **examples** of using **power** to **control**, intimidate and force solutions on other people.

These forced **outcomes** only add to the **grounds** for future conflict.

Conflict **resolution** is the process of **resolving** a dispute or a conflict by meeting at least **some** of each **side's** needs and **addressing** their interests.

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Conflict resolution sometimes requires both a **power-based** and an **interest-based approach**, such as the use of legal power and attempts to reconcile each **party's** interests through **negotiation**.

Negotiation holds the key to **getting** ahead in the **workplace**, resolving **conflicts** and creating value in **contracts**.

Especially in the resolution of **conflict**, negotiation can play an important role.

It is really easy to resolve conflict **through** the art of **negotiation**.

**Nonetheless**, it is possible to turn tense conflicts into productive **negotiations** and maintain strong relationships between the two parties.

The importance of negotiation skills in these instances is paramount.

The right **approach** to negotiation can **improve** the situation of multiple parties.

Conflict **negotiation** is **communication** focused on finding an **agreement** that addresses the concerns of parties who want different outcomes.

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Common situations that involve handling conflicts using negotiation include:

### Conflicts between employees:

Employees may sometimes encounter conflict about **responsibilities** or work quality.

Resolving the conflict and **addressing** these concerns through **negotiation** is a primary duty of **supervisors** and managers.

### Compensation:

Whether **finalizing** salary for a new **employee** or entering a contract with a **vendor**, finding a mutually **acceptable** rate often requires **negotiating** between **differing** ideas of fair pay.

### Disputes between a business and the public:

Businesses that serve the public, sometimes need to respond to a **dissatisfied** customer or group concerned individuals.

For **example**, a **restaurant** manager could enter **conflict** negotiation with a dissatisfied **customer** to resolve an issue with a meal.

### Disagreements during collaboration:

Project teams could **encounter** conflict on factors like how to use limited **resources** or approach a client request.



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### Skills/Strategies for Resolution of Conflicts:

As discussed **above**, conflict **management** plays a very important role in **preventing** conflicts among **individuals**.

We have also discussed that when **individuals** strongly oppose each other's opinions and **ideas**, the **probability** of a conflict arises.

A conflict starts when **individuals** think on different lines and find it very **difficult** to accept each other's ideas.

Conflict must be **avoided** as it destroys the **peace**, lowers the **productivity** as well as **demotivates** the individuals.

All the factors **leading** to a fight must be **explored** and efforts must be made to prevent a conflict.

**In order to control the conflict timely, an individual needs certain skill for managing the conflict which are as under:**

### Effective communication Skills:

Effective **communication skills** are of utmost **importance** to **prevent** conflicts.

While interacting with others, you have to take special care of your **speech** and the way you **speak**.

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Never ever shout on **anyone**, even if you do not **agree** with him. **Always** speak in a polite but **convincing** manner.

**Greet others with a warm smile.** It **works**. Be very specific and **precise** in your **speech**. Do not use **complicated** words and confuse others.

Keep a **control** on your tongue and do not use **words** which might hurt the **sentiments** of others. Avoid using **abusive** languages.

### **Listening Skills:**

**Conflict resolution** - and **negotiations themselves** - are likely to stall if one **party** does not feel **heard** by the other.

Engage in active listening **techniques** like repeating back critical information, reaffirming statements, and **maintaining** eye contact.

The result is a deeper **understanding** of the issue at **hand**, the other **negotiator's needs**, and mutual trust that would not develop in the **absence** of true listening.

An **individual** must not give his **expert comments** unless and until he is very clear **what** the other person wants.

**Always be a good listener.** Don't just jump to **conclusions** and assume things on your own.

Always **listen** to the other side of the story as well.

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### Discussion:

**Don't** just follow the rumor mills blindly, do discuss with others as well.

Differences can crop up anytime but **fighting** would provide no **solution**.

**It is always better to sit and discuss the issues on an open forum.**

All the **participants** must give their inputs and **efforts** must be made to find out an **alternative**.

Invite all the **members** involved and never **ignore** anyone as it would never solve the problem.

**Everyone** has a right to **express** his views and a **middle** way has to be found.

### Patience:

One **needs** to be very **patient** to avoid conflicts. There **would** be people at your **workplace** and even home who would try to **provoke** you to fight.

Never ever get **influenced**. Always **follow** your **instincts** and **support** what is right. Be very **sensible** and **patient**. Learn to keep a **control** on your **emotions**. Do not ever lose your **temper** as it would **only** make the **situation** worse.

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### **Impartial:**

An **individual** has to be **impartial** to avoid **conflicts**. **Do not always support your friend.**

Stand by what is **correct** and never **support** what is wrong.

Any **individual**, even if he is your friend must be **corrected** if you feel he is wrong.

Listen to **everyone** and never ignore **anyone** just because you **don't** know him.

### **Never Criticise:**

Make the **other** person **understand** if he is wrong.

**Don't** criticise him as it would **definitely** hurt his **sentiments**.

The other **person** might not be as **intelligent** as you are, but you have **no right** to make fun of him.

Others will look up to you if you guide the other **person** well and make him **realise** his **mistakes**.

### **Positive Attitude:**

Positive **attitude** is essential to avoid **fights** and conflicts.

In **offices**, never ever play the **blame** game.

No one is **perfect** and if you have done **anything wrong**, have the **courage** to accept it.

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Human Beings are **bound** to make **mistakes** but never try to put the **blame** on anyone else's shoulders.

Avoid **backbiting** as it only spoils the **relationships**. If you don't agree with **anyone's views**, discuss with him on his **face**, he will like it.

**Don't** always find **faults** in others and be a little more **adjusting** as life is all about **adjustments**.

### **Address the conflict, not the person:**

While other **people** can become a source of **frustration**, it is important to direct **attention** to the issue at hand instead of another **negotiator's** personality.

**Similarly**, avoid **responding** to personal attacks.

Focus on the **source** of the **problem** and the ways **negotiators** can address it.

### **Find shared interests:**

Although it is crucial to **identify needs and desirable outcomes** before **negotiations begin**, when conflict arises, it is also important to identify other negotiators' needs and find common ground.

Redefine the issue, so both sides can identify needs and achieve a win, no matter how small. Then, work together to develop a win-win situation.

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### Set an objective:

Of course, the desired **outcome** of the conflict **resolution** is an end to conflict so **negotiations** can continue.

However, it's critical to develop an objective to work toward.

If the goal of the **negotiations** is to solidify a **business deal** and the **conflict** revolves around **price structure**, the objective could be to **compromise** on an **acceptable** price that provides value for the client and profit for the **company**; the **win-win**, in this **situation**, is a clear **objective** that requires give and take.

### Determine the 'Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement' (BATNA):

A skilled **negotiator** enters the **discussion** with the **BATNA** in mind.

In addition, it is especially **important** during conflict **resolution** to determine the **BATNA** of the **opposing** negotiator.

Such an **insight** may present an **opportunity** to reduce conflict and promote **compromise**.

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To sum **up**, effective **negotiation** is a **two-way** process to resolve **conflicts** that **encourages** both sides to **actively** participate in **making** decisions.

It also **provides** a way for people to learn to **understand** each other better and to **grow** in their **relationships**.

**Negotiation** helps to create a **healthy** balance between "giving" and "getting".

Everyone becomes a "**winner**" through negotiation.

But in the process of **negotiation**, the golden rule is that to attain a '**win-win**' situation as both **parties** should feel that that they achieved **something** worth to them.

The outcome of '**win-lose**' or '**lose-lose**' situation is not **congenial** as both these **situations** are said to be failing to achieve a **solution** and as such the **negation skills** or **strategies** are said to be **not sufficient** to resolve the given conflict.