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Course- B.tech CSE

Article

“Conflict Management”

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Conflicts are natural in all walks of daily life – both at workplace and home. Thus, conflict is ever present and both charming and maddening. But conflict is a complex and big subject. There are many sources of conflict. Conflict occurs when individuals or groups are not obtaining what they need or want and are seeking their own self-interest.

Sometimes the individual is not aware of the need and unconsciously starts to act out. Other times, the individual is very aware of what he or she wants and actively works at achieving the goal. It would be better to identify conflict at an early stage and come to an understanding.Management The concept of conflict is controversial. Psychologists and sociologists have given different meanings. It is being defined as a process by few, an obstructive behavior, and goal incompatibility by others. Conflict can be expressed as:

Conflict is a process, where perception (real or otherwise) leads to disruption of desirable state of harmony and stability in an interdependent world.

Concept of Conflict Management:

‘Conflict management is the principle that all conflicts cannot necessarily be resolved, but learning how to manage conflicts can decrease the odds of non-productive 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.’ All members of every organisation need to have ways of keeping conflict to a minimum – and of solving problems caused by conflict, before conflict becomes a major obstacle to your work.

Conflicts may be competitive and cooperative. Competitive conflict is accumulative. The original issue that began the conflict becomes irrelevant. The original issue is more of a pretext than a cause of the conflict. Competitive conflict is marked by the desire to win the fight or argument, even if winning costs more and causes more pain than not fighting at all.

Costs do not matter in competitive conflict, and therefore, irrationality remains its main mark. Competitive conflict is characterized by fear, which is one of the important ingredients in a conflict becoming irrational. If one is personally invested in the outcome, this too leads to irrational conclusions, especially if issues of self-esteem, whether personal or national, are involved.

Competitive conflict can either begin by, or be rationalized by, conflicts of ideology or principle. Even more, when the desire to win overtakes any specific reason for the conflict, irrationally develops.

Importantly in history, when powers are roughly equal, such as the World War I alliances were, conflict that becomes competitive and irrational nearly always develops. In economic competition customers are the winners and the firms may be at risk. But in sports competition is encouraged.

In a cooperative situation the goals are so linked that everybody ‘sinks or swims’ together, while in the competitive situation if one swims, the other must sink. A cooperative approach aligns with the process of interest-based or integrative bargaining, which leads parties to seek win-win solutions. Disputants that work cooperatively to negotiate a solution are more likely to develop a relationship of trust and come up with mutually beneficial options for settlement.