

Structure

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a term used to mean a variety of things, in an assortment of contexts. Under the mantle of conflict are words such as fight, argue, contest, debate, combat, war and other equally evocative terms. The word conflict has been derived from the Latin word *confligere*, which means literally “to strike together”. It is impossible for two physical objects, such as two billiard balls, to occupy the same space. They conflict, and if either is in motion, the conflict will be resolved by a new position for both of them. Within the human realm, conflict occurs when different social groups are rivals or otherwise no competition. Such conflicts can have many different outcomes; one side changed, one side eliminated, both sides changed, neither side changes, nor (rarely) both sides eliminated. The popularly understood meaning of conflict is quarrel between two persons or groups. It is a physical fight or verbal duel preceded by disagreement and followed by indifference and enmity. The term may refer to isolated incidents in which a person contradicts within or two persons disagree between them or too broad and prolonged situations involving whole nation.

Aims and Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the Nature of Conflicts in a given society

- Examine the efficacy of various techniques of Conflict Resolution Mechanism

1.2 MEANING OF CONFLICT

Different scholars understand it differently. In the simple form, conflict refers to a situation which is “oriented intentionally to carry out the actor’s will against the existence of the other party or parties” (Rex, 1981, p.3).

This definition is given with an assumption that the actor pursues a desired goal which may or may not be the goal of the opposing party but the latter opposed that any way. The realisation of the goal by the actor may harass the opposing party or put it in a lower position and the very thought of losing position induces the opposing party to oppose the actor. Conflict between aggressor and victim can be cited as an example here. The encounter between murderer and victim, rapist and the raped, land lord and bonded labourer, exploiter and the exploited cover conflicts of this kind.

Some thinkers define conflict as a state of mutual antagonism or hostility between two or more parties. This refers to open clashes between individuals, street fights, or on large scale, deadly quarrels between nation states or several decades of cold war. Vihelm Aubert says, “The starting point must be sought in a state existing between two individuals characterized by some overt signs of antagonism. The term conflict here will be reserved for this state of tension between two actors. As a minimum, it must be demanded that at least one of the actors, in words or action, gives expression to a motive to frustrate the other or he actually frustrates him” (Vilhelm, 1963, p.26).

Conflict, according to some other thinkers, is a condition of incompatibility of interest or values. In the words of Jessie Bernard, “Conflict is one which arises when there are controversial and mutually exclusive goals or values pursued by different closely placed parties”(Bernard, 1957, p.40).

According to Kenneth Boulding, “Conflict exists when any potential positions of two behaviour units are mutually incompatible” (Boulding, 1963, p.4). He further defines “conflict as a situation of a competition in which the parties are aware of the

incompatibility of potential future positions and in which each party wishes to occupy a position that is incompatible with wishes of the other” (ibid). In Boulding’s sense, it is clear that firstly, a conflict may exist even though there is no antagonism or hostility latent as overt between the parties. Secondly, the parties to a conflict ought to be aware of the conflict. This distinction indicates that conflict can be competition or an incompatibility.

Incompatibility may arise because the parties are like players, competing for the same prize such as power, position, authority, territory or materials or disagreement about the rules of the game. The former is a conflict of interests and the latter conflict of values, thought; the distinction is rarely clear-cut (Deuck, 1939, p.47).

A classic understanding of conflict sees it as a dynamic phenomenon: one actor is reacting to what another actor is doing, which leads to further action. Quickly, the stakes in the conflict escalate. One sequence of events follows another, and it is difficult to decipher which party is more responsible for what happens. In popular understanding it is expressed as 'it takes two to conflict'. There are many observations which evoke this theme, notably the prevalence of mirror images, that parties and issues are seeing the conflict in the same way, only reversing the picture. There are also dynamics pushing the actors in conflicts into two camps (polarisation), creating commanding leadership (centralisation), and forming institutions with particular responsibilities and little insight (secrecy and protection). The conflict takes on a life of its own, engulfing the actors and, seemingly irresistibly, pushing them into an ever increasing conflict. The idea of conflict as a social phenomenon moving by itself is powerful. It is invoked when parties say that they have no alternatives. The dynamics of the conflict have removed all other possible actions, and are said to give a party no choice but to continue to react at increasing levels of threat and violence.

For the analysis of such dynamics some tools have been developed. Game theory is a way of illustrating how parties act within the confines set up by the game itself. If the parties follow the rules, the outcomes are predictable. But it also raises the possibility that actors can change the dynamics by making particular moves or even breaking some of the 'rules' that the conflict has generated. Such an analysis was developed in the 1960s for the

polarised East-West conflict, suggesting credible de-escalating steps that could lead to positive responses. The idea was that if one actor begins to act on its own, the other(s) may follow, and thus the dynamics change direction. Some of these ideas were used for the US-Soviet relations in early periods of détente.

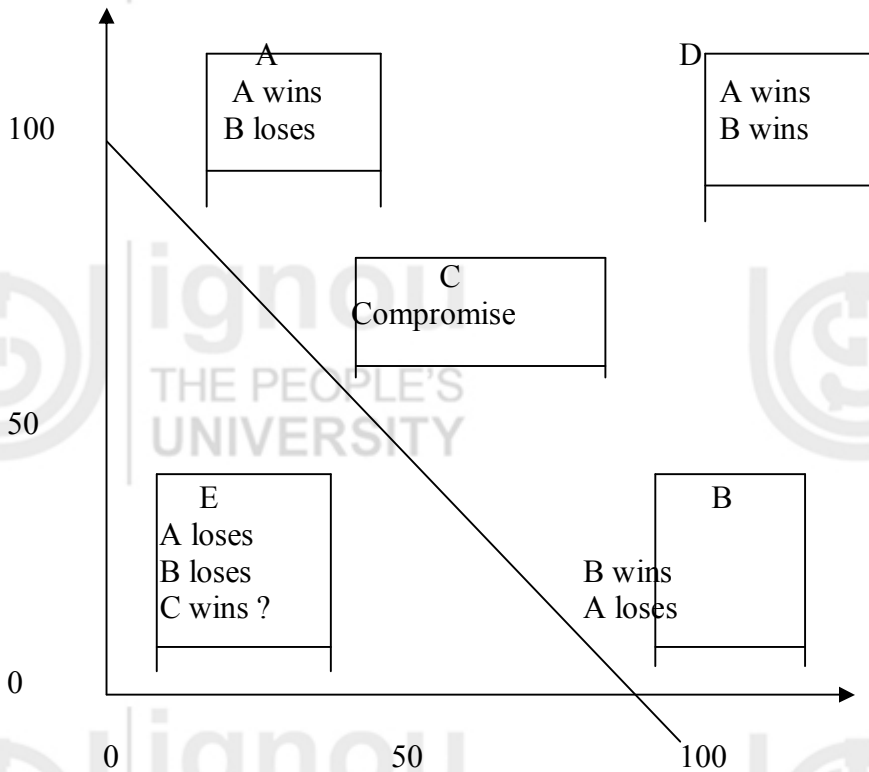
1.3 INCOMPATIBILITY ANALYSIS

Particularly fruitful is Galtung's depiction of incompatibility as central to the dynamics of conflict. A way to do an incompatibility analysis is reproduced in Figure 1.

Figure 1 shows two actors, A and B, with contradictory goals. What the dispute is about is not significant. It could concern a piece of territory, a sum of money, an attractive government post, or other scarce valuables. If A gets 100 percent of the available resources, there is nothing left for B, and vice versa. If either one wins, the situation finds itself at point A or point B, respectively, meaning complete victory for one actor and complete defeat for the other. It is an outcome an actor is not likely to abide by easily and voluntarily. Anything beyond these points may, however, be more acceptable and possible. Along the

Figure 1.1

Analysis of Incompatibility



diagonal there are positions at which the parties may meet. C marks a classical point, where the parties divide the resources 50-50, equally much (or little) for each side. The parties may also agree on going to point E, none of them takes anything, but instead the valuables are handed over to actor C, also an agreed solution. In a more sinister scenario C may enter the conflict and take the valuables from the fighting parties - an opportunistic move by an outsider. The resources may also have been destroyed during the fighting. In the space left and below the diagonal in Figure 1, there are many outcomes. Different forms of compromise may be found here. To the right and above the line, however, there are other complications. This is where Galtung's ideas lead: transcendence. The hope is to find points of type D, where both parties can get what they want at the same time. The mathematical formulation is, of course, impossible. There

cannot be 200 per cent of something, but this space indicates the challenge of finding solutions beyond established rules and thinking. Creativity is needed for transcendence. Political battle often stifles innovation and reduces the options perceived by the actors. Sometimes, the strains of the effort may result in imaginative actions.

The dynamic approach to conflict analysis points to the significance of establishing a dialogue between the parties. This is where, for instance, finding a conference format is important. It requires that the parties can participate, but together with others who can serve as practical go-betweens and add issues which may unlock positions. It also points to the importance of confidence-building measures, not only in the military field but also in social, cultural, economic and other areas, as they can be instrumental in changing the dynamics of a conflict. Conferences and confidence-building are mostly multilateral, and in this approach the injection of mediators and facilitators is important. Third parties take a particular role in such settings.

1.4 CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISMS

A most original idea is of conflict resolution mechanisms. This refers to the creation of independent procedures in which the parties can have confidence. These are formal or informal arrangements to which they can agree to hand over their conflict, whose solution they can accept and which can define the termination of a conflict. Such mechanisms exist in internal affairs, for instance, courts, democratic procedures, and elections called to solve a parliamentary stalemate. They are to be found in history as duels, oracles and ordeals. They are scarce in international relations, where court systems are weak and political fora easily become arenas of dispute, rather than frameworks for handling conflicts. In internal affairs, the possibilities of appeal are important, creating opportunities to review what has been done on lower levels. As part of a future conflict resolution mechanism this can also be a useful device in the international system.

Finally, it follows from this perspective that parties with non-violent methods are potentially efficient in changing the dynamics. This gives a role to peace movements but also to other groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that work for conciliation and understanding across divides. Such parties can even be involved in

conflicts and take sides, but they pursue the goals with peaceful means, not with violence. They constitute an alternative approach for a community wishing to achieve change, but not convinced that violence is an appropriate action. For instance, in Western Europe, Social Democratic ways of impacting on capitalist systems seem to have achieved more welfare, have stronger support in the public and lasted longer than did the bitterly competing Communist parties. This particular divide focused on the possibility of peaceful versus violent change.

Still, this perspective is weak in its understanding of why conflicts start. Is it reasonable to assume that conflicts really begin with conflict attitudes, or are such attitudes a result of previous behaviour and pre-existing incompatibilities? Can there be a more complex background that also has to be part of the analysis? What if the parties who often are modelled to be of equal strength in fact are highly unequal? These are critical challenges to conflict theory. This gives reason for considering alternative approaches.

1.5 TRANSCENDING INCOMPATIBILITY

In theory, there are seven distinct ways in which the parties can live with or dissolve their incompatibility. First, a party may change its goals, that is, *shift its priorities*. It is rare that a party will completely change its basic positions, but it can display a shift in what it gives highest priority to. This may open ways in which the other side can reciprocate. Leadership changes are particularly pertinent in this respect. With such changes, new possibilities are created. It does not mean that conflict resolution has to wait for a revolution. Leadership is often recruited from a limited segment of the population, and continuity remains important. Still, new leaders think differently and, thus, new leadership matters. There are also other changes that can take place. Changes in the surrounding world may be important, leading to shifts in strategic priorities. Among major powers, the rise of a new power or the fall of an old one may be such a condition. For less powerful actors, changes in major power relations have many implications. Shifts between *detente* and confrontation can be important for conflict resolution, as was clearly seen at the end of the Cold War. Economic crises can change priorities. The costs of pursuing a war may drain important resources and, thus, the chances of a peace

dividend may seem more attractive. However, the possibility for such changes should not be overestimated and it would be outright dangerous for a party to hinge a negotiation policy on expectations of change in a particular direction. New leaders may be weaker, major power relations may change for the worse, economic crises may induce less interest in compromise, etc. But it is important for the parties to continuously probe the other side, to find out if there are shifts in priority.

The second way is a classical one: the parties stick to their goals but find a point at which resources can be divided. This is point C in figure 1. It is sometimes seen as the essence of compromise, but it is only one form of compromise. It may mean that both sides change priority. However, it is done in such a way that the change by side A is coupled to a change by side B. To meet halfway, at some point which has a symbolic value, is easier for the parties. Then, it is also possible for them to defend the deal to other decision-makers and to the general public. It may appear reasonable and be in accordance with values in the society. If the incompatibility concerns territory, this may mean drawing a border approximately half the distance between the two demands. It makes sense, but only so long as the areas are not inhabited by people who will have their own interests, or if the area contains resources that should also be part of the deal. Compromise is most readily made with monetary resources. Negotiations between employers and employees have a long history of finding optimal points at which to draw the dividing line between the two sides. In many such situations, it is important for the parties to get some resources, rather than nothing.

A third way is *horse-trading*, where one side has all of its demands met on one issue, while the other has all of its goals met on another issue. It means using two separate incompatibility diagrams (Figure 1), one for each issue, and where each party gets 100 per cent. This can also be described as a compromise, but works in a different way from the division we just described. In horse-trading over territory, the idea would be that A takes area 1 and B takes area 2, although both of them have had demands on areas 1 and 2. Instead of making a complicated division, an entire piece of territory is taken over by one or the other. Again, as we noted before, this assumes that there are no particular features to the territory, or that such features somehow are equal for both (for instance,

oil in both). In a contest over political power positions, A may support B in some matters and receive corresponding support from B in others, meaning A and B abandon previous views and together form what is sometimes referred to as 'national pacts' or 'historical compromises'.

A fourth way is *shared control*. In this case the parties decide to rule together over the disputed resource. This comes close to outcome D indicated in Figure 1. A territory can be shared by being ruled as a condominium, where decisions require the consent of both parties. An economic resource can be operated by a joint company and a formula devised for investment and profit sharing. A country can be run by a coalition government, a frequent phenomenon in most parliamentary democracies. Shared control may require some degree of trust; it may also be a temporary arrangement for a transition period. Power-sharing arrangements also exemplify this. This is where all parties are represented in government according to a formula agreed upon beforehand (for each five per cent of the national vote a party gets one seat in the cabinet, for instance). Even if agreed to only for a predetermined period, it can mean that a conflict is successfully transcended, and that at the end of the period the conflict situation is very different from what it was at the beginning. This can also be applied to international regimes setting up rules for using water in shared rivers. In international affairs such arrangements may mean the beginning of regional integration; in internal affairs they can be contributions to the integration of a fragmented society.

A fifth way is to *leave control to somebody else*, which means externalising control, so that the warring parties agree not to rule the resources themselves. This is outcome E in Figure 1. The primary parties agree, or accept, that a third actor takes control. Such solutions have gained prominence in the discussions on international conflicts during the 1990s.

Sixth, there is the possibility of resorting to *conflict resolution mechanisms*, notably arbitration or other legal procedures that the parties can accept. It means finding a procedure that can resolve the conflict according to some of the previously mentioned five ways, with the added quality that it is done through a process outside the parties' immediate control. The legal mechanism builds on the idea of neutrality, distance and

resort to precedents and history. Among conflict resolution mechanisms we would also include holding new elections and arranging a referendum, which means leaving the issue to a concerned but still non-predetermined audience. For this to be a legitimate way of ending a conflict, the conflicting parties should have a fair chance of presenting their views. A number of border disputes have been resolved with the use of arbitration. A remarkable case is the drawing of the border between Iraq and Kuwait after the Gulf War, settled according to an exchange of documents among the two parties, but under the authorisation of the UN Security Council.

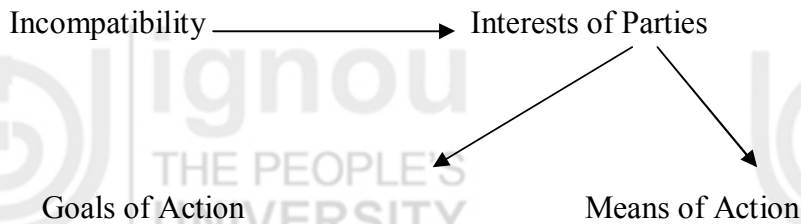
Seventh, issues can be *left to later* or even to oblivion. By appointing a commission, parties can gain time, and when the commission reports, political conditions and popular attitudes may have changed. Some issues may gain from being delayed, as their significance may pale or their symbolic character may be reduced. This is an argument for not solving all questions at the same time. But it requires that there be a second chance to bring them up. In fact, the second chance is important for a loser to accept defeat or enter into a compromise. If there is a credible way in which one can return to the issue later or run in a new election, then the agreement is more acceptable. The party does not argue that the issue is given less priority, only that its time is not yet ripe. In the case of the first mechanism, in contrast, there is a significant change of position and the party does not return to its previous view.

The word 'conflict' indicates patterns of behaviour. But social scientists mean it to refer to the cause of that act as well. That is to say, underlined condition for hostility which is called root conflict is equally, if not more important than the manifestation of the hostility, the behaviour. For example, killing or rape; it may be more correct to consider them as an expression rather than forms of conflict, acts indicating the existence of say social, economic, cultural, psycho-pathological, gender or personality conflict.

Conflict of interest stems from a situation of scarcity. Both the parties want the same thing but there is not enough available for each to have what it wants. The situation of scarcity is not only the condition that brings forth conflict. When the interest is intensified to the extent of becoming 'greed', even a situation of 'just enough' would bring forth conflict.

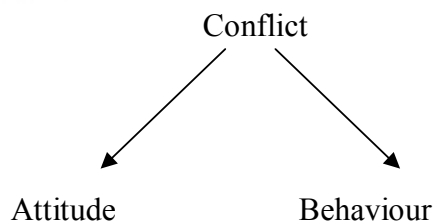
Galtung refers to conflict as some type of incompatibility. He distinguishes conflict as an undefined, latent condition, and its manifestation in terms of the attitude and behaviour of actors. A destructive behaviour and destructive attitude should not be confused with conflict. Conflict refers to some type of incompatibility: one goal stands in the way of another.

Incompatibility



Attitudes and behaviour, Galtung explains, are usually assumed to be negative when they are related to conflict. These negative manifestations can take the form of sudden burst of hatred or direct violence. But they can also take institutionalised form of generalised social distance and structural violence.

Violent Conflict



Hatred Social Distance Direct Violence Structural Violence Violence

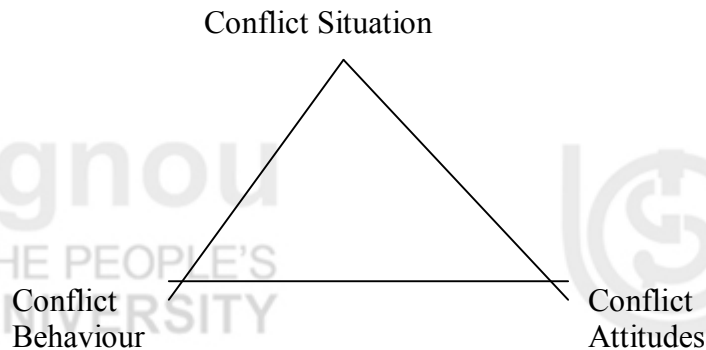
The term 'conflict' is ambiguous. It involves many factors. It may refer to the behaviour of different parties, the underlined conditions of conflict or the factors that motivate the actors for conflict. When there is a conflict, there is a continuous issue, embargo -

condition, a condition of deprivation, denial, injustice that bring forth conflict, there is character discrepancy between the party that is an inflaming volatile attitude that worsens the situation resulting in hostile outburst of action between the parties. All factors of a situation together constitute a conflict. Therefore, a clear understanding of the term 'conflict' requires a comprehensive definition which has been constructed by Galtung as "Conflict Triangle".

1.6 CONFLICT TRIANGLE

In a slightly more complicated version, the conflict triangle - introduced by Johan Galtung in the 1960s - provides a helpful analytical tool. It suggests that a conflict moves among the triangle's three corners, where corner A refers to conflict attitudes, B to conflict behaviour and C the conflict or contradiction itself (the incompatibility). A conflict sequence can begin in any of these corners. In later writings, Galtung gives somewhat more emphasis to C as a more frequent starting point. The dynamics are still most important, however, even expressed in conflicts having life-cycles. From this it follows that the resolution of conflict, conflict transformation, is a 'never-ending process'. A solution 'in the sense of a steady-state, durable formation is at best a temporary goal'. The conflict is transformed, for instance, through transcendence (where the goals are met fully for the conflict parties), compromise (goals are met less than fully for the sides) and withdrawals (goals are given up) (Galtung, 1996, pp.81-90).

Conflict Triangle



Conflict situation is one in which two or more social units or parties perceive that they are 'differentially placed' and are having mutually incompatible goals; in which there is discrepancy- what is and what ought to be, disparity, discrimination, denial of rights, exploitation, scarcity, competition etc. A situation of this kind by itself is not conflict, but is potent with conflict chances.

Conflict attitude means the aggressive or volatile nature of the parties which, in a situation of conflict, converts into behaviours. Conflict attitude can be greed, anger, impatience, frustration, fear, interpersonal tension, aggressive drive etc.

Conflict behaviour means action intended to carry out **will** against the resistance of other party. It is action taken by a party in a conflict situation with the intention of making the opponent abandon or modify its goal.

According to Robert Merton, this state of incompatibility is called 'latent conflict situation'. Here the actors do not realize the urgency or the immediacy of conflict. When these actors, the privileged masters, get the energy and cognizance to translate the objective interest into subjective goal, they move to alter the situation and conflict occurs (Merton, 1968, p.3).

Adam Curle sees the linear sequence of this process (Curle, 1979, p.9).

- (a) Low awareness – of injustice but ignorantly passive. This is potential conflict [Mitchel calls this state “incipient conflict”]
- (b) A high awareness of basic conflict of interest through education and conscientization [this is latent conflict]
- (c) Confrontation of the oppressed and the oppressor through non-violence means [it is overt conflict]
- (d) Conciliation and bargaining aiming at a settlement [solution]
- (e) Restructuring the formerly un-peaceful relation.

1.7 CONFLICTS: CYCLICAL OR DIALECTICAL

While some scholars say conflict is primarily cyclical in its development and moves through a predictable sequence of stages, others say it is dialectical and stage wise process in which synthesis takes place and by which society is transformed from one state to another.

Karl Marx saw conflict developing in phases with each phase unfolding from the preceding one and leading ultimately to complete revolution. This would at last produce free society and there would be no more conflict as there would be no class. He says that the unity and togetherness of group is determined by its commonly perceived interest or goal with another group. "The separate individuals form a class or unit only in so far as they have to carry on a common battle against another class; otherwise they are on hostile terms with each other as competitors" (Marx, 1964, p.45).

George Simmel holds that "Conflict lets social boundaries between groups, socialites and nations by strengthening group consciousness and awareness of separatedness thus establishing the identity of groups, societies and nations within" (Simmel, 1968, p.34). The function of conflict is exploited by some states for personal interest. When a nation is riddled with internal strife, the last strategy the leaders apply is declaring conflict (war) with another nation. Simmel states, "a state of conflict pulls the members so tightly together and subjects them to such uniform impulse. This is the reason why war with the outside is sometimes the last chance for the state ridden with inner antagonisms to overcome these antagonisms" (Ibid).

Conflict is generally considered as evil or as Talcott Parson says, "a disease" (Parson, 1964). "It is treated as a pathological condition equilibrium." Conflict within or without places people in stress and strain. It may result in physical altercation, destruction or annihilation or its less intensity arrests the regular course of life. In the process of conflict, huge measure of energy is depleted which, in turn, stunts the growth and development.

Sigmund Freud expressed, "Almost every intimate emotional relation between people which last for some time—marriage, friendship, the relation between parent-children—leaves a sediment feelings of aversion and hostility. When this hostility is directed against

people who are otherwise loved there is conflict” (Freud, 1948, p.55). He suggested that opposite instincts exist side by side in the unconscious, with no disharmony. Conflict occurs only when the overt, verbal, symbolic or emotional responses required to fulfill one motive are incompatible with those required to fulfill another. The situation frequently involves other motives that produce incompatible response tendencies.

However, scholars opine that conflict is a sort of ventilation that salvages individuals suffocating with the accumulation of hostility. It drains the tension caused by the precipitation of aversion and brings them all closer again.

Conversely, if anyone tries to avoid such conflict or resolves it, he would only help the sedimentation of aversion which, at a point of time, proves to be fatal, would break the relation forever. Hence conflict serves, contrary to the general belief, a unifying role. Society, in this respect, is “sewn together by its inner conflict” (Ross, 1920, p.165).

1.8 INEVITABILITY OF CONFLICTS

A final common assumption among conflict researchers is that the phenomenon of conflict, in one form or another, is an inevitable and ever present feature of society and social interaction.

The very nature of individual as a ‘unit’ of the society, brings forth reasons for conflict. The norm of Homo-Sapien is to be together. Humans live as social animals. But at the same time, every individual, despite being bound together by many commonalities and counterpetal characters, is absolutely of unique make-up. Each individual develops his own concepts, perceptions, understanding and likes and dislikes. Each is different in some ways from others. No two individuals are identical, not even identical twins are similar.

From this physiology to their cognition, everything is different. When individuals having all differences within live socially together, their interactions tend to have elements of

contradiction, disagreement and in-congenity; in other words, incompatibility in thoughts, words and deeds. Hence their relationship is potent with conflict.

The last century offered humans increased opportunities for conflict processes such as industrialization and urbanization that encourage contact among people, competition, numerous forms of group differentiation (ethnic, occupational, status) and consequent visibility of inequalities and stratification within society. Since competition, contact and visibility are prerequisites for conflict, R.W. Mack claims, “the mathematical possibilities of conflict increases both within and between societies under industrialization” (Mack, 1965, p.334).

Social research indicates a trend of high degree job dissatisfaction, labour conflicts, labour-management conflicts. Workers want better working facilities, credit for work done, leisure and recreation, while the owner demands efficiency, sincerity and more output of work, higher productivity and more profit. A worker or a farmer, with his moderate income, is constantly in conflict with the rising trend of material expectation of family. He is not able to fulfill the wants of the family members and they, under the pressure of their wants, fail to understand the bread winner and there is conflict between them.

There is a conflict between parents and children over behavioural practice, attitudes, manners, education, rights and duties, likes and dislikes etc. In family, conflict occurs on parental role, employment of mothers, intergenerational gap, material aberration etc.

Individual is, in a complex social system, in conflict at every step. One may develop quarrel with fellow passenger, in market, wherever interaction takes place. People conflict with each other in the name of religion, caste, creed, political identity, ideology etc.

Political conflicts too have constant occurrence. Clashes occur between cadres in fixing up posters, tying banners, drawing symbols on walls, campaigning for the party candidate etc. While these are at the grass roots level, the fight for recognition, equitable rights, autonomy and self-determination are major political conflicts found at the national level.

In addition to conflict with fellow beings, we find ourselves in conflict with our physical environment. The greediness of humans and their consumption needs resulted in forests being cut down beyond recovery. India's forest cover has been reduced to 11% as against the minimum requirement of 35% of the total land area. Natural resources such as fossil oil and various minerals, once regarded as inexhaustible, are being rapidly depleted. One unilateral conflict with lower beings has resulted in the extinction of many rare species and pushed many more to the verge of extinction. One clash with nature leads to less perception, unseasonal monsoon, ozone layer depletion and the resultant UV rays penetration, air pollution and consequent acid rain, raising level of sea etc. are the priori retaliation of the nature.

1.9 SUMMARY

Thus the individual is in conflict with self, fellow beings, family members, superiors, subordinates etc. Society is in conflict over faith, belief, worship, ideology, caste etc. Nations find themselves in conflict within and without. There is conflict over the maritime line and over atmospheric control. In short, humanity is in a continuous state of conflict.

Sometimes, we avoid conflict, some conflicts we accommodate, with some we reconcile and compromise with some others. Depending on the moods and temperament, we react on the occasions either aggressively or with restraints. Taking into account the nature of our relationship with a particular opponent, we respond either in a hostile manner or be passive on different occasions and regarding different methods of solving conflict. When the opponent is a dear one, like sister's son, spouse etc., we adopt more rational and humane approach to solve the conflict. Any attempt to resolve conflicts that emerge from multiple causes, therefore, has to be multidimensional if the result is to be permanent. In other words, any attempt to resolve conflicts ought to be one that deals with every cause of the conflict.

Will it be possible to envisage a society free from conflict? Such a society seems so remote from the world as we know it that the inevitability of continual and repetitive conflict seems more sensible, says Robert Lee (Lee, 1943, p.3). Thus it would be difficult to conceive of an ongoing society where social conflict is absent. The society without conflict is a dead society...like it or not, conflict is a reality of human existence and, therefore, a means of understanding social behaviour.

The hope of human existence is that in spite of perpetual conflict humans continue to thrive successfully, overcoming all these conflicts. On the basis of the nature of conflicts and the occasions, we tackle them with different efficiency.

Conflict is, therefore, universal fact. Our very experience pre-supposes conflict in its generation, and our knowledge, apart from its priori categories, is based on such conflict. Man is learning about himself, others and reality, his growth and development and his increasing ability to create his own heaven or hell. The desire to eradicate conflict, the hope for harmony and universal co-operation, is the wish for a frozen, unchanging world with all relationships fixed in their patterns - with all in balance.

1.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1 Critically examine the nature of conflicts in the society today.
- 2 Discuss the efficacy of various techniques of Conflict Resolution Mechanism.

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