10.0 CONFLICT

1. Define functional conflict.
The type of conflict that brings in positive consequences and supports the goal of the group is known as functional conflict. Functional conflict is thus a form of constructive conflict.

2. What is conflict?
Conflict is a situation in which two or more parties feel themselves in opposition. In other words, conflict is a process in which an effort is purposefully made by one person or unit to block another that results in frustrating the attainment of other goals or the furthering of his or her interests.

3. Enumerate the nature of conflict.
The key features that enumerate the nature of conflicts are enlisted as follows:
- There remain mutually exclusive goals;
- There exists two types of perception;
- There must be intentional effort;
- Conflict exists either at the latent or overt level.

4. What are the major causes of conflict?
The major causes of conflict are listed below:
- Inadequate communication;
- Delayed information;
- Effects of filtration;
- Barriers of culture, language;
- Inadequate training of sender and receiver;
- Problem of noise

5. List out the different types of conflict.
The different types of conflict are enlisted as follows:
• Intra-personal conflict (conflict within the individual)
• Intra-personal conflict (conflict between two or more individual)
• Inter-group conflict (conflict between different group)
• Inter-organizational conflict (conflict between two dependent organizations)

6. What are the positive consequences of conflict?
The key positive consequences of conflict are enlisted as follows:
• Conflicts is a major stimulant for change.
• Conflict help to avoid group thinking.
• Conflict fosters creativity and innovation.
• Conflict often develops cohesion and satisfaction.

7. What are the negative consequences of conflict?
The key negative consequences of conflict are enlisted as follows:
• Conflict is one of the key reasons of stress in people;
• Conflict diversifies group time and energy in winning the conflict rather than the achievement of organizational goals;
• Conflict brings tensions in the organization leading to instability and chaos.

8. Enlist the stages of conflict.
A general conflict process normally goes through five key stages enlisted as follows:
• Stage 1: Potential opposition or incompatibility
• Stage-2: Cognition and personalization
• Stage-3: Intentions/conflict resolution style
• Stage-4: Behaviour
• Stage-5: Outcomes

9. What is inter-group conflict?
When the conflict involves two or more group it is known as inter-group conflict. For example: when whole marketing department is in conflict with production department, it is referred as inter-group conflict.

10. Explain the nature and sources of conflicts.

Nature and Sources of Conflicts

Conflict can arise from a variety of sources. They can be classified into two broad categories: structural factors, which stem from the nature of the organization and the way in which work is organized and personal factors, which arise from differences among individuals. The causes/sources of conflict can be summarized within two categories.

Structural Factors

a. Specialization: When jobs are highly specialized, employees become experts at certain tasks. For example, in case of a software company, while there is one specialist for databases, another for statistical packages, and yet another for expert system. As the highly specialized people have little awareness of the tasks that others perform, such a case leads to conflict among the specialists.

b. Interdependence: Interdependence occurs when two or more groups depend on each other to accomplish their tasks. Depending on other people to work done is good when the process works smoothly. However, when problem arises, it becomes easy to blame other party, and as such, conflict escalates. The potential of conflict increases as the degree of interdependence increases.

c. Goal differences: Sometimes different work groups having different goals have incompatible goals. For example, in a cable television company, the salesperson's goal is to sell as many new installations as possible. This can create problem for the service department, because their goal is to do timely installations.

Personal factors

a. Skills and abilities: Work force in an organization/department is composed of people with varying levels of skills and abilities. Such diversity in skills and abilities leads to conflict, especially when jobs are interdependent. Workers may find it difficult to work with a new boss, fresh from University knowing a lot about managing people but unfamiliar with the technology they are working.

b. Personalities: Personality also causes individual differences. It is differences in personality that neither the manager likes all of his co-managers and subordinates nor all of them like the manager. This creates conflict among them. Research studies report that usually an abrasive personality is rejected by others. An abrasive person is one who ignores the interpersonal aspects of work and feelings of colleagues.
c. Perception: Differences in perceptions can also lead to conflict. One area in which perception can, for example, differ may be the perception of what motivates employees. Managers, for example, usually provide what they think employees want rather than what employees really want.

d. Values and ethics: People also hold different beliefs and adhere to different value system. Older workers, for example, value company loyalty and probably do not take a sick day when they are not really sick/ill. But, the younger workers, valuing mobility, may be take a sick day to get away from work.

e. Emotion: The moods of the people can also be a source of conflict in the work place. Problems of home often spill over into the work arena, and the related moods can be hard for others to deal with.

f. Communication barriers: Communication barriers such as physical separation and language can create distortions in message, and these, in turn, can lead to conflict value judgment also sometimes serves as barrier.


Inter-Group Conflict

When there is a conflict between two different groups of an organization, it is called as inter-group conflict. Conflict between marketing and finance group in an organization is an example of inter-group conflict. The concepts of inter-group conflict can be explained through below given points.

1. There are distortions of perception, related to one's own group and about the other group. Firstly, perception of one's own group is highly selective: people see only the best aspects of their own group and deny any weakness. Secondly, perception of the other groups is systematically distorted: group see only the worst parts of other groups and deny other groups positive accomplishments. Thus, inter group conflict leads to increased use of stereotypes. Each group develops more positive stereotype of itself and a more negative of other.

2. Interaction and communication between groups decreases. As group members feel hostile toward members of rival group, there is less desire for interaction with them. Moreover, decreased interaction. Makes it easier for each group to maintain its negative stereotype of the other.

Even when group are forced to interact with each other, those interactions become fairly rigid and formal. Whatever information is passed between groups is carefully rationed and sometimes deliberately distorted. Groups tend to ignore the similarities between their positions and exaggerate the differences.
3. There is a shift from problem-solving orientation toward other groups to a win-lose orientation. There are various facts to this shift in orientation. First, there is a much clearer distinction drawn between the groups, resulting in a "we-they" rather than a "We-versus-the problem" orientation. Second, all exchange with the other groups are evaluated in terms of victory or defeat. Third, the other group tends to see the problem only from their own point of view, rather than in terms of the needs of both groups. Fourth, the parties emphasize the benefits of winning the conflicts in the short run and tend to ignore the long-term consequences of the conflict for the relationship between the groups.

4. As a result of negative stereotyping, decreased communication between groups, win-lose orientation, etc. hostility inevitably occurs between rival groups. Members of the other group are seen as the enemy, and deserving of hostile attacks.

Types of Inter-Group Conflicts
The primary types of inter-group conflict are listed as follows:

a. Functional conflict: Conflict that supports the goals of the group and improve its performance.

b. Dys-functional conflict: Conflict that hinders group performance

c. Task conflict: Conflict over content and goals of the work

d. Relationship conflict: Conflict based on interpersonal relationships

e. Process conflict: Conflict over how work gets done

The Dynamics of Inter-Group Conflict
When conflicts take place between group the following dynamism can be seen:

1. Changes within each group: When there will be inter-group conflict, the following changes are seen within each group. Each group now tries to make them strong to meet the hurdles created, by other group. In this regard, one can observe following scenarios.

a. Loyalty to the group becomes more important: In the face of an external threat, the group demands more loyalty from individual members. Not only is social interaction with people outside the group not encouraged; it is expressly discouraged. Such interaction could lead to inadvertent betrayal of group strategy and secrets. Deviance is more closely monitored and punished.

b. There is increased concern for task accomplishment: When there is inter-group conflict, the group members becomes more concerned for accomplishing the task. There will be less informal relation among group members but high formal relation among group members.

c. Leadership in the group becomes autocratic: When inter-group conflict is present it is especially important for a group to be able to respond quickly and in a unified manner to the
activities of other groups. A democratic work style can reduce the group's capacity to respond quickly. Hence, the leadership usually switches to autocracy.

d. The organization and structure of the group becomes more rigid: After the inter-group conflict among the groups, each group is concerned in making the group effective. There will be rigid organizational structure with more focus on formal relation. Moreover, tasks are highly valued.

e. Group cohesiveness (degree of unity) is increased: In the face of an external threat, past differences and difficulties between group members are forgotten. The group closes ranks to meet the challenge. Individual group members find both the group as whole and other group members more attractive.

Changes in Relations between Groups:
• Interaction and communication between group decreases
• There are distortions of perception, both one's own group and about the other group
• There is a shift from a problem-solving orientation toward other groups to a win lose orientation
• There is increased hostility forward the rival group.

12. Describe the approaches of conflict management.

Approaches to Conflict Management

Conflict arises from different source. It is inevitable to avoid conflict in organization setting. So with appropriate technique, conflict should be managed. There are different approaches to manage conflict. Some of the highly adopted approaches of conflict management are explained below.

1. Dominance: Dominance is the easiest technique to manage conflict. In this technique manager will eliminate the conflicting parties. By, dismissing the conflicting parties, the conflict can be managed. This is, however a short-term solution.

2. Avoidance: Conflict can be managed by avoiding it. In this technique one party avoids the conflict and let the conflicting parties to win. Moreover, redefining the goals and not making over-lapping goals helps to manage conflict.

3. Smoothing: In this technique, the differences between two parties are disguised while similarities are highlighted. This make both the part feel that they are not much apart. This shared viewpoint enhances the possibility of working together for common goals.

4. Compromise: In this technique the conflicting parties compromise with each other on certain points. The party provides something else to other parties in exchange for the desired outcomes.
If the desired outcome is not achieved conflict again rises. Hence, this is also a temporary solution.

5. Hierarchical decision-making: In this technique, a common superior can be requested to use his authority to resolve conflict. However, it is very widely accepted technique that loses its goodness when the authority figure fails to understand the issue properly and the subordinates do not respect them.

6. System restructuring: By restructuring system, one can often manage the conflict in the organization.

It involves clarifying demands and segregating roles in different position, and people can resolve role conflict.

7. Bargaining: In this technique parties in conflict bargain each other to solve the conflict. Here the use of bargaining power is highly used.

13. What do you understand by conflict? Examine their negative and positive outcomes in organization.

Meaning of Conflict
Conflict is a situation in which two or more parties feel themselves in opposition. In other words, conflict is a process in which an effort is purpose fully made by one person or unit to block another that results in frustrating the attainment of other goals or the furthering of his or her interests.

Positive Outcomes of Conflict
More often conflict leads to certain positive outcomes. A few of them are:

a. It provides as individual a chance to think again, undertake self-introspection and have a second look at the existing things, be they procedures, policies, equipment, behaviors etc. In this regard, conflict is a major stimulant for change.

b. It leads to innovation and at times, to new direction. It is therefore, even necessary for organization survival and growth.

c. It helps seek classification and generate search behavior.

d. At times, conflict is also used as means to certain ends and creates confusion or set subordinates against each other in order to maintain the interested party's own position. It may not be a positive outcome in the strict sense of the term from the organizational point of view, but it is certainly a management strategy toward off problems temporarily. It may be viewed as an unavoidable cost of the pursuit of one's aspiration.
e. When conflict is developed, attention is immediately drawn to the malfunction parts of a system. It is an indication that the situation calls for improvement. Conflicts are, therefore, an essential portion of a cyber-native system.

f. It energies people and leads to mild stimulation. Moreover, it helps the employees to test their capacities.

g. It serves as a cementing force in a group and incredible unity is witnessed even in a heterogeneous group in times of tension.

h. For some. It is exhilarating, provides endless challenge and meaning to their lines.

**Negative Outcomes of Conflict**

Many times conflicts may be detrimental and disastrous. A few of such circumstances in which it can be termed as harmful and undesirable are discussed below.

a. When conflict does not lead to solution of a problem, it is unproductive and investment of time and effort goes waste.

b. It is undesirable if it creates a climate of distrust and suspicion among people, if some people feel defeated and if it develops antagonism instead of spirit of cooperation.

c. When management loses objectivity and treats disagreement as equivalent to disloyalty and rebellion, an opportunity for creativity should be deemed to have been lost. It may even pour oil over troubled waters; exploit differences to strengthen itself and weaken other, and accept resolution capable of different interpretations.

d. In an attempt to find a solution, management may gloss over serious difference and suppress certain feelings which may except at inappropriate moments and hit safe targets.

e. In the event of a conflict, there may be intensification of internalization of sub unit goals which may result in the neglect of overall organizational goals.