

Chapter 5- Conflict Management

5.1: Organizational Conflict

Industrial Dispute

Industrial Disputes Act 1947 defines any dispute or difference between employers and employees or between employers and workers, or between workers and workers, which is connected with the employment or non-employment or terms of employment or with the conditions of labor of any person. Industrial Disputes are frequently clouded by a sense of exploitation, distrust and discontent between employee and employers. In simple language, the disputes between employers and employees on any Industrial matters are known as industrial disputes. The term 'dispute' is characterized by the following factors :

1. Dispute mainly relate to the strife between employers and their employees.
2. There must actually be a difference.
3. Its work related or industrial matter issues.
4. Disputes must be raised by group or class of workmen.
5. Disputes between one or two workmen and their employers are not an industrial disputes.

Forms of Industrial Dispute

- 1) **Strikes:** A strike means a cessation of work by a body of persons employed in any industry acting in combination or a concerted refusal under a common understanding of a number of persons who are or have been so employed to continue work or to accept employment.
- 2) **Lock Out:** lock out is the counterpart of strike. Lock outs bring psychological pressure on the workers to agree to his conditions or face closure of the units. A lockout is decaled as a trial of strength between the management and its employees.
- 3) **Gherao:** Its means "to surround". According to National Commission on Labour " Gherao tend to inflict physical duress on the persons affected and endanger not only industrial harmony but also create problems of law and order".

4) **Picketing:** It is primarily a method of drawing public attention towards the disputes and it is legal so there is no violence involved. In picketing, workers are dissuaded from reporting for work by certain persons stationed at the gate of the factory.

5) **Boycott:** Boycott aims at disrupting the normal functioning of an enterprise, through forceful appeals and negative behavioural acts.

Conflict: It is a state of discord caused by the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values and interests. A conflict can be internal (within oneself) or external (between two or more individuals). Conflict explains many aspects of social life such as social disagreement, conflict of interests and fight between individuals, groups and/or organizations. The basic organization philosophy is 'to try & move conflict to a win-win situation for parties involved.

Definition: Organizational Conflict or otherwise known as workplace conflict, is described as the state of disagreement or misunderstanding, resulting from the actual or perceived dissent of needs, beliefs, resources and relationship between the members of the organization. At the workplace, whenever, two or more persons interact, conflict occurs when opinions with respect to any task or decision are in contradiction.

5.2 Types of Conflicts:

Interpersonal conflict refers to a conflicts between two individuals. This occurs typically due to how people are different from one another. We have varied personalities which usually results to incompatible choices and opinions. It is a natural occurrence which can eventually help in personal growth or developing your relationships with others. In addition, coming up with adjustments is necessary for managing this type of conflict.

Intrapersonal conflict occurs within an individual. The experience takes place in the person's mind. Hence, it is a type of conflict that is psychological involving the individual's thoughts, values, principles and emotions. Interpersonal conflict may come in different scales, from the simpler mundane ones like deciding whether or not to go organic for lunch to ones that can affect major decisions such as choosing a career path. Furthermore, this type of conflict can be quite difficult to handle if you find it hard to decipher your inner struggles. It leads to restlessness and uneasiness, or can even cause depression. In such occasions, it would be best to seek a way to let go of the anxiety through communicating with other people.

Intragroup conflict is a type of conflict that happens among individuals within a team. The incompatibilities and misunderstandings among these individuals lead to an intragroup conflict. It arises from interpersonal disagreements (e.g. team members have different personalities which may lead to tension) or differences in views and ideas (e.g. in a presentation, members of the team might find the notions presented by the one presiding to be erroneous due to their differences in opinion). Within a team, conflict can be helpful in coming up with decisions which will eventually allow them to reach their objectives as a team.

Intergroup conflict takes place when a misunderstanding arises among different teams within an organization. For instance, the sales department of an organization can come in conflict with the customer support department. This is due to the varied sets of goals and interests of these different groups. In addition, competition also contributes for intergroup conflict to arise...

Causes of Conflict:

Wages and Allowances: The most important cause for disputes relates to wages. The demand for increase in wages and allowances is the most important cause of industrial disputes. There are some more economic reasons who are the cause of industrial disputes are bonus, working conditions and working hours, modernization and automation and demand for other facilities.

Union Rivalry: Most organizations have multiple unions. Multiplicity of unions leads to inter union rivalries. If one union agrees to a wage settlement, another union will oppose it.

Political Interference: Major trade unions are affiliated to political parties. Political affiliation is not peculiar to our country alone. Everywhere trade unions have been compelled to engage in political action to obtain enough freedom from legal restraint to exercise their main industrial functions.

Managerial Causes: These causes include autocratic managerial attitude and defective labour policies. In this includes failures of recognize the trade union, defective recruitment policies, irregular layoff and retrenchment, defiance of agreements and codes, defective leadership, weak trade unions.

To encourage or discourage membership in any trade union by discriminating against workmen.

To discharge or dismiss workmen.

To indulge in acts of force or violence.

To refuse to bargaining collectively, in good faith with the recognized trade unions.

To insist upon individuals workmen, who are on a legal strike, to sign a good conduct bond as a precondition to allowing them to resume work

5.3 Measures taken to minimize conflict

Things to remember:

- Conflict is both natural and inevitable.
- Perspectives are neither right nor wrong.
- There are many ways to manage conflicts.
- Everyone needs control, respect, fairness, and space.
- We often have the ability to influence others, but we rarely are able to control them.

Communication: Organizations invest considerable amount of money and effort to develop and maintain communication with the employees. Democratic exchange of information provides credibility and transparency. Each organization follows suitable principles to exchange information among members, which do not allow grudges to accumulate. Thus, organizational conflict is avoided by sharing information.

Committee: Each organization develops a number of committees or teams to look into a specific organizational question, for which it is not possible for any single individual to arrive at a solution. Collective contribution to a vexed problem provides wider acknowledgement of fairness and wider acceptance.

Mission and Vision Statement: This provides wider goals to the conflicting parties on what is required to be done. Why are we here? What do we want to achieve? How do we achieve what we wanted to achieve? These broad questions provide solid guidance on what is required to be done. Narrow range of vision of conflicting parties finds wider reason to exist and provides guidance on what is required to be done.

Commanding Position: In some cases, the directive from a significant individual in the organization provides a clear solution. Each member accepts that solution by the force of the chair power of the individual. Although this is not desirable, this is being used quite extensively throughout the organization.

Counselling: is one of the important avenues to resolve individual conflicts. Individuals have unique psychological orientations – they may be introvert, extroverts – they may enjoy the relations, others may be conservative. These unique ways of self-expression may generate unique types of problems. Therefore, there is a great need to provide some special psychological assistance and guidance. They facilitate and guide individual employees to find their own solution.

Legal Framework: in some cases it is legally mandatory to have some framework available on the shop floor to have a work committee resolve shop floor conflict. This effort is directed at resolving the root of the problem before it becomes bigger.

Fair Organizational Infrastructure: Each organization aspires to design fair system and processes in which employees get equal treatment. Each organization develops a number of policies to design fair processes. E.g. salary advance, child education, leave encashment etc. Each of these policies attempts to clearly outline the eligibility criteria, the detail scheme, and how frequently it could be availed of. This provides fair opportunity to all.

Collective Bargaining: it is a process by which employers on the one hand and representative of the employees on the other, attempt to arrive at agreements covering the conditions under which employees will contribute and be compensated for their services.

Code of Discipline: The code of discipline evolved by the Ministry of Labour and Employment. The code of discipline defines duties and responsibilities of employers and workers. The objectives of promoting constructive co-operation between their representatives at all levels, avoiding stoppage as well as litigation, securing settlement of grievance by mutual negotiation, conciliation and voluntary arbitration, facilitating the growth of trade union and eliminating all forms of coercion and violence of Industrial Relation.

Grievance Procedures: A grievance may be understood as an employee's dissatisfaction or feeling of personal injustice relating to his or her employment relationship. There are some condition which may give rise to a grievance are like a violation of law, a violation of the intent of the parties as stipulated during contract negotiation , a violation of company rules, a change in working conditions or past company practices and a violation of health and /or safety standards.