

6.6. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

When a conflict has arisen whether **Intrapersonal** or **Interpersonal** in an organization, it must be resolved as early as possible. In an organization, there must be someone to intervene before the situation. In order to resolve the conflict effectively the superior should handle the situation carefully and take the following steps:

- (a) Preliminary step – knowing the conflict
- (b) Diagnosing the issue.
- (c) Applying any of the conflict handling modes.

CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS STYLES BY DIFFERENT MANAGEMENT EXPERTS

6.6.1. Thomas and Kilmann's style

In the 1970s Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann identified five main styles of dealing with conflict that vary in their degrees of cooperativeness and assertiveness. They argued that people typically have a preferred conflict resolution style. However they also noted that different styles were most useful in different situations. They developed the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) which helps any management professional to identify which style one tends towards when conflict arises.

Thomas and Kilmann's styles are:

Competitive: People who tend towards a competitive style take a firm stand, and know what they want. They usually operate from a position of power, drawn from things like position, rank, expertise, or persuasive ability. This style can be useful when there is an emergency and a decision needs to be made fast; when the decision is unpopular; or when defending against someone who is trying to exploit the situation selfishly. However it can leave people feeling bruised, unsatisfied and resentful when used in less urgent situations.

Compromising: People who prefer a compromising style try to find a solution that will at least partially satisfy everyone. Everyone is expected to give up something, and the compromiser him- or herself also expects to relinquish something. Compromise is useful when the cost of conflict is higher than the cost of losing ground, when equal strength opponents are at a standstill and when there is a deadline looming.

Collaborative: People tending towards a collaborative style try to meet the needs of all people involved. These people can be highly assertive but unlike the competitor, they cooperate effectively and acknowledge that everyone is important.

Avoiding: People tending towards this style seek to avoid the conflict entirely. This style is typified by delegating controversial decisions, accepting default decisions, and not wanting to hurt anyone's feelings. It can be appropriate when victory is impossible, when the controversy is trivial, or when someone else is in a better position to solve the problem. However in many situations this is a weak and ineffective approach to take.

Ideally one can adopt an approach that meets the situation, resolves the problem, respects people's legitimate interests, and mends damaged working relationships.

6.6.2. The "Interest-Based Relational Approach"

The second theory is commonly referred to as the "Interest-Based Relational (IBR) Approach". This type of conflict resolution respects individual differences while helping people avoid becoming too entrenched in a fixed position.

In resolving conflict using this approach, one should follow these rules:

- Make sure that good relationships are the first priority
- Keep people and problems separate
- Pay attention to the interests that are being presented
- Listen first; talk second
- Set out the "Facts"
- Explore options together:

By following these rules, one can often keep contentious discussions positive and constructive. This helps to prevent the antagonism and dislike which so-often causes conflict to spin out of control.

6.6.3. Johari Window Model

This model is highly useful in analysing the causes for interpersonal conflict. The window is shown with four quadrants representing four distinct aspects of every personality. Johari Window summarises of four cells they are:

1. **Open Self** : Also called public area, this cell represents an ideal situation. Here the person knows about himself and others. There would be openness and compatibility and little reason to be defensive. Mutual understanding and friendship between people are the highest in this space. Naturally there is little scope or no scope for any conflict.
2. **Hidden Self** : Also known as the private or secret area, this cell denotes that the person understands about himself but does not know about other person. The result being that the person remains hidden from others because of the fear of how others might react. The person may keep his/her true feelings, attitudes or secret and will not open up to others. There is potential interpersonal conflict in this quadrant.
3. **Blind Self** : Alternatively known as blind area, this cell represents a situation where the person knows about others but does not know about himself/herself. As in the hidden self, there is potential for conflict in this cell too.
4. **Undiscovered Self** : This is potentially the most explosive situation. The person does not know either about himself or about others. There is a misunderstanding, which leads to interpersonal conflict. Alternatively this area is known as the dark area.

The best way to reduce the sizes of hidden self, blind self, and undiscovered self is to have better communication between the person and others.

6.7. MEANING AND TYPES OF GRIEVANCES

GRIEVANCE can be defined as

- Dissatisfaction is any state or feeling of discontent
- Dissatisfaction orally made known by one employee to another is a complaint.
- A complaint becomes a grievance when brought to the notice of the management.

According to Fillipo, "The term would include any discontent and dissatisfaction that affects organizational performance. It can either stated or unvoiced, written or oral, legitimate or ridiculous.

(a) A complaint is a discontent that has not assumed importance.

(b) A complaint becomes grievance when the employee feels that injustice has been committed.

6.7.1. Characteristics of Grievances

- (i) It may be unvoiced or expressly stated.
- (ii) It may be written or oral
- (iii) It may be valid, legitimate or untrue or false.
- (iv) It may relate to the organizational work.
- (v) An employee may feel an injustice has been done.
- (vi) It may affect the performance or work.