Vol 3 Issue 11 Aug 2014

Monthly Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Review Of Research Journal

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ISSN No: 2249-894X

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2249-894X

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE





A PERSPECTIVE ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN AN ORGANIZATION

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Abstract:

In any organization, there is some level of conflict, which one has to face. Conflict is defined as disruption in the peace in the state of mind of individuals. In any organization conflict is inevitable. There will always be some minimum level of conflict which will prevail. The paper seeks to presents the summary of conflict and its management strategies. We also try to give some different perspective on the conflict management strategies which can give researcher a thought in this area.

KEYWORDS:

Conflict, Reasons, Consequences, Management, Perspective.

INTRODUCTION

In any organization, there is some level of conflict, which one has to face. Conflict is defined as disruption in the peace in the state of mind of individuals. In any organization conflict is inevitable. There will always be some minimum level of conflict which will prevail. There are various types of conflicts. These can be interpersonal conflict such as two managers fighting for promotions or two individuals with different level of perceptions are fighting on how to do the job or intra organizational conflict that arises between two departments at horizontal or vertical level with respect to resources sharing or there can be inter organization such as two companies are fighting for customers or clashes between the organization and NGOs over some issue.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Blake and Mouton (1964) have proposed five conflict management styles based on their dual concern model. (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Cai & Fink, 2002):(1) Withdrawing (low concern for both people and productivity); (2) smoothing (high concern for people and low concern for productivity); (3) forcing (low concern for people and high concern for productivity); (4) problem solving (high concern for both people and productivity); and (5) compromising (moderate concern for both people and productivity. Rahim (1983) create five conflict management styles based on two dimensions—concern for self and concern for others that is avoiding, compromising, integrating, obliging and dominating. Thomas and Kilmann (1974, 1977) based on the work of Blake and Mouton labelled two components of conflict behavior as assertiveness and cooperativeness. Assertiveness was a behavior that satisfies one's own concern, and cooperativeness was a behavior that satisfies another person's concerns.

Title: "A PERSPECTIVE ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN AN ORGANIZATION", Source: Review of Research [2249-894X] Vipin Kumar yr:2014 | vol:3 | iss:11

REASONS FOR CONFLICT

- 1. Inconsistency in the goals of two individuals will automatically leads to fight between them
- 2.Resource Scarcity: when two individuals or department are fighting because they are sharing resources on some common basis and resource is in scarce quantity
- 3. Two individuals with different back ground and values system will conflict on various issues concerning on how to do the task
- 4. When an individual deliberately come in the way of the goals of the other persons, it will leads to conflict.
- 5. Status difference and feeling of prestige/inferiority will also leads to conflict.
- 6.Credits fight: people in the organization also fights with each other to take the credits for responsibility assigned by the seniors
- 7.Diversity in the work force: The workforce has been increasingly becoming diversified vis a vis the gender, culture and ethnicity.

CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT

There are both positive as well as negative consequences of conflict. The positive consequences include high competitive spirit, problem identifications, and stimulation to changes, innovations and to break group norms. The negative consequences include loss of productivity, high level of stress, contrary to organization role, wastage of time and effort, and unhealthy atmosphere.

MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT

Conflict cannot be eliminated, but we need to manage conflict in such a manner so as to increase the level of positive consequence, and decrease the level of negative consequences. The following are the various strategies of managing the conflict in an organization:

- 1.Use of Intermediaries: An intermediary can be assigned to handle the conflict situation between two parties. Generally a person common to both parties, having influence on the both the parties is selected for this purpose.
- 2. Ignoring Conflict: Sometimes it is better to ignore conflict situations so that things will on peace on its own, especially when conflict situations are quite intense
- 3. Forcing one group to settle down or quit the organization or face any other action. These techniques are applied especially in the context of lower level staff.
- 4. Problem Solving: the problem which is the main root of any conflict must be solved in order to eliminate conflict which has been arrived out of a situation.
- 5.Compromising: In this strategies, both the parties has to Compromise to reach to a common destination of the contradictory direction

CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVE

The selection of a particular conflict management style depends upon the functioning and culture of the organization. Generally an Indian employee follows avoiding or accommodating conflict management strategies. It seems like problem solving and collaborating strategies of managing conflict seems to be the best strategy for resolving conflict. We want to give augmented view on it. These strategies will work well for apparent conflict. But there is also need for managing hidden conflict as well. Culture sessions and group sessions specially for disclosing grievance should also be organized to make apparent conflict and then to find out solutions

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