GSP2206: PEACE STUDIES AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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Objectives

- At the end of the lectures, participants should be able to:
- Understand the concept of conflict and conflict management/resolution.
- Know the various types and causes of conflict
- Know the various techniques managers/leaders use in managing conflict
- Learn the techniques of managing escalation problem
- Relate what they learnt in the class with the current situation in their surrounding.

Understanding Conflict and Conflict Management

- A conflict-free society has never existed and never will exist.

- Antagonisms, tensions, aggressions, stereotypes, negative attitudes and frustrations will always be an integral part of any society or organization where people have to live and work together.

- Therefore, conflict is seen as an inseparable part of people's life particularly managers, employees, politicians, academics, religion and community leaders.

- It can be seen from global, national, organizational, or local levels

- At each level, participants should be able to relate examples happening around them with the issues raised.

At the Global Level

- Globally, escalation of crisis in multiple countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Eastern Ukraine, North Vs South Korea have made conflict management more important and continued to attract greater attention and combined efforts of different stakeholders across the globe.

- At both socio-political and economic levels, the roles of EU, AU, ECOWAS, UN, NATO, and ECOMOG in conflict management continue to remain relevant.

- E.g. Civil war in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, embargo on Qatar etc

At the National Level

- At the national level, conflict management is said to attract greater attention more than ever.
- The adoption of rotational presidency in Nigeria between the North and the South since 1999.
- Federal Government of Nigeria Amnesty Programme for the Niger Delta Militants
- Several delegations that visited the Niger Delta Region headed by the Vice President of Nigeria, Yemi Osinbajo, to find lasting solution to the destruction of oil installations in the region
- Are ALL seen as practical step in addressing myriad of conflict issues in Nigeria.

......National Level

- Negotiation with Boko Haram insurgents that led to the release of 21 abducted Chibok girls and later 80 girls
- Reconciliation between herdsmen and farmers in some parts of the country are all seen as practical steps towards conflict resolution in Nigeria
- At the organizational level, both at the public and private settings, conflict management has never been important.
- The frequent and incessant industrial conflict in Nigeria has clearly revealed that the conflict management skills of most people in positions of authority are at best inadequate.
- The case of ASUU and the Federal Government of Nigeria under the questionable leadership of Goodluck Jonathan was a clear example among others.

Definition and Nature of Conflict

- The term 'conflict' has no single clear definition. Much of the confusion has been created by scholars in different disciplines who are interested in studying conflict (Rahim, 2005).

- When two or more social entities (i.e., individuals, groups, organizations, and nations) come in contact with one another in attaining their objectives, their relationships may become incompatible or inconsistent.

- Relationships among such entities may become inconsistent when two or more of them desire a similar resource that is in short supply; when they have partially exclusive behavioral preferences regarding their joint action; or when they have different attitudes, values, beliefs, and skills.

Conflict Defined!!

- Conflict can be defined as the perception of differences of interests among people (Thompson, 1998).

- Another definition of conflict would be a process of social interaction involving a struggle over claims to resources, power and status, beliefs, and other preferences and desires.

- The aims of the parties in conflict may extend from simply attempting to gain acceptance of a preference, or securing a resource advantage, to the extremes of injuring or eliminating opponents. (Bisno, 1988; Coser, 1968).

Definition….cont

- Schmidt & Kochan (1972) define conflict as a perceived condition that exists between parties (individuals, groups, societies, nations et cetera) in which one or more of the parties perceive *goal incompatibility* and some *opportunity for interfering* with the goal accomplishment of others.

- Robbins & Coulter (2000) refer conflict as perceived incompatible differences that result in interference or opposition.

Definition...cnt

- Baron (1990) after reviewing various definition of conflict, summarized the concept of conflict as:

➢ a. Conflict includes opposing interests between individuals or groups in a zero-sum (win - lose) situation;

➢ b. Such opposed interests must be recognized for conflict to exist;

➢ c. Conflict involves beliefs, by each side, that the other will thwart (or has already thwarted) its interests;

➢ d. Conflict is a process; it develops out of existing relationships between individuals or groups and reflects their past interactions and the contexts in which these took place; and

➢ e. Actions by one or both sides do, in fact, produce thwarting of others' goals.

➢ **In addition, the concept of conflict includes the extreme, the subtle, indirect, and highly controlled forms of interference, to overt acts such as strikes, riots, protests and wars.**

View about Conflict: The *Traditional view*

- Over the years three distinct views have evolved about conflict.

- The *Traditional view* (dominant from the late nineteenth century until the mid-1940s) assumes that conflict is bad, always has a negative impact, and leads to declines in performance as the level of conflict increases.

- As such, conflict must therefore always be avoided. In this view, conflict is closely associated with such terms as violence, destruction, and irrationality.

- The response to conflict in the traditional view is to reduce, suppress, or eliminate it.

Traditional View…..

- It was not generally effective; when they are suppressed, the root causes cannot be identified, and the potentially positive aspects of conflict cannot emerge.

- This traditional view of conflict is still widely held because industrial, political and business institutions that have a strong influence on our society concur with it.

- This negative view of conflict played a role in the development of labour unions.

- Violent or disruptive confrontations between workers and management led people to conclude that conflict was always detrimental and should therefore be avoided.

Human relations view

- Emerged in the late 1940s and held sway through the 1970s.
- It argues that conflict is natural and inevitable in all organizations and that it may have either a positive or a negative effect, depending on how the conflict is handled.
- Performance may increase with conflict, but only up to a certain level, and then decline if conflict is allowed to increase further or is left unresolved.
- This approach advocates acceptance of conflict and rationalizes its existence. Because of the potential benefits from conflict, managers should focus on managing it effectively rather than suppressing or eliminating it.

Interactionist view

- The newest perspective, the *Interactionist view* assumes that conflict is necessary to increase performance.

- While the behavioral approach accepts conflict, the Interactionist view encourages conflict based on the belief that a harmonious, peaceful, tranquil, too-cooperative organization is likely to become static, apathetic, stagnant, and unable to respond to change and innovation.

- This approach encourages managers to maintain an appropriate level of conflict enough to keep organizations self-critical, viable, creative, and innovative.

Conflict Resolution Vs Conflict Management

- Conflict resolution implies reduction, elimination, or termination of conflict. A large number of studies on negotiation, bargaining, mediation, and arbitration fall into the conflict resolution category.

- Conflict management does not necessarily imply avoidance, reduction, or termination of conflict. It involves designing effective strategies to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict and enhancing the constructive functions of conflict in order to enhance learning and effectiveness of an organization.

Conflict: A Fact of Life

❑Conflict is a reality of social life which exists at all levels of society. Hence, it viewed as:

➢ *Natural:* Life and conflict are inseparable. Conflicts are dynamic and are not inherently negative or positive

➢ *Being about differences:* Individual, interpersonal, intra-group, inter-group, or at broader levels. It is how we express such differences and what we do that can lead to positive or negative experiences for us and those around us.

➢ *Danger and opportunity:* Conflicts can both be dangerous and beneficial depending on how the people involved choose to deal with them.

Conflict: A Fact of Life

- ***Moving up and down an escalator***: 'going up' factors are what contribute towards turning a conflict into something negative or destructive. The de-escalating or going down factors are the factors that help us to channel the conflict energy into something positive and constructive.

- ***Something we all know about:*** we have all in one way or the other encountered and resolved conflicts and we will continue to do so. Therefore, it would be helpful if each one of us would start to have a positive look at conflicts. The way we view conflicts determines how we deal with them, either from a negative point of view which often lead to destruction, or from a positive point of view which enables us to get something good and beneficial from a conflict.

Conflict: A Fact of Life

- **_Something that is culturally bound:_** There is not one right way to handle conflict and we cannot assume that all people and societies think and deal with conflicts in the same way.

- **_A challenge:_** From the points above it is apparent that conflict and conflict resolution are a challenge that we all need to deal with in our daily lives be it in our families, religious institutions, and indeed political parties. Let us always remain prepared to face this challenge whenever we encounter it.

- What role have you ever played in resolving conflict??

Sources of Conflict: Economic conflict

- Daniel Katz (1965), created a typology that distinguishes three main sources of conflict: *economic*, *value*, and *power*.

- ❖ ***Economic conflict***: This involves competing motives to attain scarce resources.

- ❖ Each party wants to get the most that it can, and the behavior and emotions of each party are directed toward maximizing its gain.

- ❖ Union and management conflict often has as one of its sources the incompatible goals of how to slice up the "economic pie".

Sources conflict: Value Conflict

- *Value conflict*: This involves incompatibility in ways of life, ideologies – the preferences, principles and practices that people believe in. International conflict (e.g., the Cold War between USA and Russia in the 80's and 90's; stand-off between USA and North Korea) often has a strong value component, wherein each side asserts the rightness and superiority of its way of life and its political-economic system.

Sources of Conflict: Power Conflict

- *Power conflict*: This occurs when each party wishes to maintain or maximize the amount of influence that it exerts in the relationship and the social setting. It is impossible for one party to be stronger without the other being weaker, at least in terms of direct influence over each other.

- Power conflicts can occur between individuals, between groups or between nations, whenever one or both parties choose to take a power approach to the relationship.

- Power also enters into all conflict since the parties are attempting to control each other.

- As a former ruling party that has been in power for about 16 years, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) is caught in a serious power conflict between the two splinter groups of Ali Modu Sheriff and Ahmad Makarfi.

Sources of Conflict

- It must be noted that most conflicts are not of a pure type, but involve a mixture of sources.

- For example, union-management conflict typically involves economic competition, but may also take the form of a power struggle and often involves different ideologies or political values.

- But it is important to note that the more sources that are involved, the more intense and intractable the conflict usually is.

- Any Example from Global, National, Organizational or Local level???

Levels of Conflict: Interpersonal Conflict

- ***Interpersonal conflict:*** This occurs when two people have incompatible needs, goals, or approaches in their relationship. Mainly due to Communication breakdown, differences in motives, values or styles, (e.g.) if both parties in a relationship have a high need for power and both want to be dominant in the relationship, there is no way for both to be satisfied, and a power struggle ensues.

- Usually involve the use of rewards and punishments, deception and evasion, threats and emotional blackmail, and sweet talk or ingratiation.

Role Conflict

- ***Role conflict:*** If there are ambiguities in role definitions in an organization or unclear boundaries of responsibilities, then the stage is set for interpersonal friction between the persons involved. Unfortunately, the conflict is often misdiagnosed as interpersonal conflict rather than role conflict, and resolution is then complicated and misdirected.

- This type of conflict is very common in organizations among employees or agencies that have similar roles.

- Any example??

Intergroup Conflict

- *Intergroup conflict*: This occurs between collections of people such as ethnic or racial groups, departments or levels of decision making in the same organization, and union and management.

- Competition for scarce resources is a common source of intergroup conflict

- Societies have developed numerous regulatory mechanisms, such as collective bargaining and mediation, for dealing with intergroup conflict in less disruptive ways

- Intergroup conflict is especially tense and prone to escalation and intractability when group identities are threatened.

- The costs of destructive intergroup conflict can be extremely high for a society in both economic and social terms.

Multi-Party Conflict Vs Intl Conflict

- These complex conflicts typically involve a combination of economic, value and power sources.

- This complexity is often beyond the reach of traditional authoritative or adversarial procedures, and more collaborative approaches to building consensus are required for resolution (Cormick et al, 1996; Gray, 1989).

- *International conflict*: This occurs between states at the global level. Competition for resources certainly plays a part, but value and power conflict are often intertwined and sometimes predominate.

- The differences are articulated through the channels of diplomacy in a constant game of give and take, or threat and counter-threat, sometimes for the highest of stakes.

- Mechanisms of propaganda can lead to many of the same social-psychological distortions that characterize interpersonal and intergroup conflict.

- **Constructive/Functional/Positive Conflict:** Functional conflict may actually encourage greater work effort and help task performance. One of the main benefits of constructive conflict it is that it gives its members a chance to identify the problems and see the opportunities. Also it can inspire to new ideas, learning, and growth among individuals.

- stimulating innovation, creativity, and growth; organizational decision making may be improved; alternative solutions to a problem may be found; lead to synergistic solutions to common problems; individual and group performance may be enhanced; individuals and groups may be forced to search for new approaches and articulate and clarify their positions.

Destructive/Dysfunctional/Negative Conflict:

- Dysfunctional conflict is believed to be destructive.
- Such form of conflict usually hinders organizational performance and leads to decreased productivity.
- This conflict orientation is characterized by competing individual interests overriding the business's overall interests.
- Managers withhold information from one another.
- Employees sabotage others' work, either intentionally or through subtle, conflict-motivated disinterest in teamwork (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2008).

Destructive/Dysfunctional/Negative Conflict: Outcomes

- Job stress, burnout, and dissatisfaction; communication between individuals and groups may be reduced or completely avoided; a climate of distrust and suspicion can be developed; relationship may be damaged job or organizational performance may be reduced; resistance to change can increase; and organizational commitment and loyalty may be affected.

- The differences between these two types of conflict are not in their sources but in the manner in which each of them is expressed.

- In constructive conflict, each party resists attacking the other. Instead, both sides take part in thoughtful discussion. They listen to each other's point of view, and try to find mutually beneficial solutions.

- By contrast, in dysfunctional conflict both parties are involved in confrontation which does not lead to any beneficial solution (Whetten & Cameron, 2012).

Conflict Management Techniques

- Conflict management is the ability to recognize conflict (intra, inter, and organizational) and to respond in ways that alleviate emotional tensions and enhance relationships, such that opportunities for growth, creativity, and productivity are enhanced, and disputes prevented. It also includes the resolution of any disputes that do arise, and the containment of power struggles, through appropriate interventions.

- In other words, conflict management involves acquiring skills related to conflict resolution, self-awareness about conflict modes, conflict communication skills, and establishing a structure for management of conflict in your environment.

Conflict Management Techniques

- Good Governance
- Effective Communication
- Collaboration
- Compromise
- Avoidance
- Accommodation
- Domination/Competition
- Confrontation/Fighting
- Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
- Adjudication

Treating Escalation Problems (Crisis Management)

- **Escalation Training**
- **Cooling-Off Periods**
- **De-escalatory Language**
- **Dealing with Destructive and Hateful Speech**
- **Media Management**
- **Step-by-Step De-escalation (GRIT):** Graduated Reciprocal Reductions in Tension.
- **Controlled Confrontation**
- **Dealing with Extremists**
- **Changing Leaders**
- **Ground Rules**
- **Managing Strong Emotions**
- **Peacekeeping**
- **Observers**
- **Future Focus**
- **Develop Personal Relationships**

Important Hints for Effective conflict Resolution

- a. Conflict Mapping
- Strategic Option Identification and Costing
- Analysis of Similar Conflicts
- Identifying and Involving All Potential Disputants
- Understanding Historical Context
- Recognizing Related Disputes
- Assisted Scoping
- Opening Lines of Communication

Conclusion

- It recognizes that many a times effective solution to a problem is half solved when its cause is already known.

- It is worthy to note that not all forms of conflicts among individuals, groups, organizations, and societies should call for immediate resolution. Some conflicts are usually mild and manageable and they further pave way for better communication and understanding.

- Conflicts that lead to better ideas and innovation lead to improved performance and productivity. These are positive conflicts and therefore should be maintained and encouraged.

- Whereas, conflicts that exist in the contrary frameworks are negative conflicts, and therefore, in whatever dimension they exist, the management, the constituted authorities or the stakeholders should immediately move in to resolve them.

- However, the choice and effectiveness of any conflict resolution strategy depend on the circumstances or the exigencies of the environment prevailing at a particular time. That is to say, there is no one best method of resolving conflict for all conflict situations.

Thank you for listening!! Anticipating your comments and questions