CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of writing this research paper is to communicate information about conflicts and the conflict resolution procedures. Conflicts are universal part of ones life and they take place everywhere within every kind of setting, but the individuals are required to possess certain skills and attributes in order to minimize conflicting situations. Conflict within itself is neither considered good nor bad; however the manner in which the parties handle the conflict determines whether it is constructive or destructive. When conflicts are resolved with mutual understanding and coordination between the parties then it is stated to be constructive but sometimes conflicting situations take the form of a war then it proves to be destructive. Conflict resolution methods, skills, sources of conflict and methods of conflict resolution are the points that have been highlighted in this research paper.

Keywords: Conflict Resolution Methods, Conflict Resolution Skills, Sources of Conflict and Methods of Conflict Resolution

INTRODUCTION

Conflicts are stated to be an integral part of any society; within any organization, institution, company and so forth, conflicts do take place, sometimes conflicts may be minor and at other times they may take a major form which would cause dire consequences. Conflicts are stated to be universal attributes of human society; they emerge due to economic differentiations, social change, cultural formation, psychological formations, political transformations, attainment of high level positions, power, authority and so forth. Conflict resolution is a rapid and comprehensive field that needs to be recognized in all the disciplines and areas; it is about understanding and being aware of schemes, theories and methods that are used in bringing about resolutions for conflicting situations. Researchers who chose conflict resolution as their field study the observable facts of conflict and try to analyze the methods to restrain it. The main purpose of conflict resolution is to maintain effective and harmonious relations between people, states, and even countries (Bercovitch, n.d.).

CHARACTERISTICS OF CONFLICTING RESOLUTION METHODS

Multilevel – Conflicts may take place at all levels such as families, neighborhoods, affiliations, they may take place at the national, international, regional or within the community, they may be interpersonal and intrapersonal (ICR, 2011). These are the kinds of conflicts and the conflicting resolution procedures have to be in accordance with the kinds of conflicts, for

17

example if a conflict takes place between family members then it can be solved by mutual understanding between them.

Multidisciplinary – The new field of conflict resolution had to represent many fields which include politics, international relations, strategic studies, development studies, individual and social psychology etc. The main reason for this is that conflicts may take place at all levels, in all kinds of settings, therefore the conflict resolution procedures has to contain knowledge about different fields and backgrounds(ICR, 2011) .

Multicultural - Human conflict is a global phenomenon within an increasingly complicated and interconnected local and global cultural network, this had to be an accurately cooperative international enterprise, in terms of both the geographical locations where conflict is encountered and the conflict resolution initiatives organized to address them (ICR, 2011).

Analytical and Normative - The basis of the study of conflict and the conflict resolution procedures has to be an organized examination and understanding of the statistics of heated quarrels, inconsistencies and arguments, but this was to be combined from the beginning with the normative aim of learning how to bring about a transformation in a genuine and prospective manner from aggressive conflicting situations into non- aggressive procedures of social, political and other forms of change (ICR, 2011).

Theoretical and Practical – In conflict resolution procedures, there has to be an interaction between theory and practice. When there is theoretical understanding and practical experience of what resolution procedures can be applicable and what cannot be applicable resolving the complexities only than adequate informed experience grow (ICR, 2011).

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

The parties who are involved into conflicts have to possess certain conflict resolution skills which have been stated as follows: (CRS, n.d.).

1. Developing Positivity – Conflicts are considered to be normal and an unavoidable part of ones life, two persons or groups cannot always agree on each and everything, hence conflicts arise. What is important is that conflicts have to get resolved with mutual understanding, respect and positivity, in this manner conflicts provide an opportunity for growth thus strengthening the connection between two people or groups.

2. Recognizing and Resolving Conflicting Needs – In order to effectively recognize and resolve the conflicting needs one needs to be prepared and peaceful, one has to develop a high emotional quotient and control ones emotions and behavior, one should calmly listen to what the other person is saying and should be aware of and respectful of discrepancies by avoiding impertinent words and actions.

3. Being Considerate and Thoughtful – This involves recognizing and responding to crucial matters, being forgiving and forgetful; one should be able to inquire about negotiation

18

and avoid punishing the other and believe that bringing about resolutions to conflicting situations can support the interests and requirements of both parties.

4. Being free of Stress – One should possess the ability to remain relaxed and focused in tense situations; this is the vital aspect of conflict resolution. The best way to rapidly and consistently relieve stress is through the senses of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. Each individual responds differently towards sensory input so they need to find things that are soothing to them.

5. Recognizing and Managing Emotions – Emotional awareness is said to be the key to understanding of oneself and others; without this an individual will not be able to communicate effectively with others over disagreements. The ability to handle conflict depends upon being associated with the strong feelings of anger, sadness and fear; when one is afraid of strong emotions than ones ability to resolve conflicts is weakened.

6. Improving ones Nonverbal Communication Skills – Nonverbal communication includes eye contact, facial expressions, tone of voice, posture, and gestures. Important communication that takes place during conflicts is mainly done nonverbally; paying attention to nonverbal signals in a heated exchange may help in getting to the origin of the problem and in determining solutions. Nonverbal signals such as calm tone, comforting touch or a concerned facial expression may play an important role in neutralizing a heated exchange.

7. Using Humor and Play in Resolving Conflicts – Conflicts and heated arguments can be avoided between persons by communicating in a humorous and playful manner; one should laugh with the other person not at him/her. Humor helps in saying the correct things, reducing anger and tension, reframing problems and in this way, conflict can become a prospect for greater correlation and familiarity.

SOURCES OF CONFLICT

There have been three main sources of conflict that have been stated as follows: (Fisher, 2000).

Economic Conflict – This kind of conflict involves competing purposes to achieve inadequate resources. Each party possesses this desire to accomplish the most of what is available; actions, behavior, norms, policies and rules of each party are formulated towards maximizing the gain. Due to this fact, economic conflicts take place between two or more parties, as well as between union and management.

Value Conflict – This involves incongruity in ways of life, preferences, ideologies, principles and practices that people believe in. In international conflicts for example, there is a strong value constituent, each side emphasizes the appropriateness of its supremacy, political system and economic conditions.

Power Conflict – This conflict occurs when each party tends to preserve or maximize its influence that it exerts in a relationship or social setting. These conflicts occur between individuals, groups or nations, when a party tries to maximize its power approach to a relationship. Power also enters into all conflicts since the parties are making an effort to exercise their control over each other.

Task Conflict – This is also referred to as substantive or cognitive conflict; it arises when there is a disagreement between two parties or individuals on the basis of task that is to be implemented. When the task has not been completed in time or when there are differences of opinions regarding the task being performed then this conflict takes place (Zhang & Zhang, 2012).

Relationship Conflict – This is also known as emotional or affective conflict, it occurs when there is individual oriented or a relationship oriented dispute. It mainly involves emotional anxiety, or opposition related to factors such as esteem, power, trust, attitude, honesty, respect and so forth. This conflict also takes place when there are differences of judgment that are not connected to any kind of objective or job (Zhang & Zhang, 2012).

METHODS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Regardless of the kind of conflict, the source of conflict; there have been different approaches to deal with the incompatibilities that take place. The approaches have been identified as follows: (Fisher, 2000).

The Win-lose approach - Individuals become familiar with the ways of conflict such as dominance, aggression and competitions. This approach is to force the other side to submit. Sometimes, this is done through socially acceptable methods such as majority vote, the authority of the leader, or the determination of a judge. Sometimes, it involves secret strategies, threat, innuendo – whatever works is satisfactory. There is often a tough we-they difference accompanied by the standard indications of intergroup conflict. The valued outcome is to have a conqueror that is superior, and a vanquished who withdraws in dishonor, but who prepares very carefully for the next round; in the long run, everyone loses.

The Lose-lose approach – This approach is applied by minimizing conflict or by reaching compromises. In neither case is the inventive prospective of productive conflict resolution realized or investigated; disagreement is seen as unavoidable. Sometimes, this is indeed the reality of the situation, and the costs are less than in the win-lose approach, at least for the loser. Each party gets some of what it desires to achieve, and quits itself to partial satisfaction. Neither side is aware that by confronting the conflict completely and cooperatively they might have formed a more agreeable resolution.

The Win-win approach – This is a cognizant and organized attempt to capitalize on the goals of both parties through mutual problem solving. The conflict is seen as a problem to be solved rather than a war to be won. This strategy focuses on the needs and constrictions of both

20

parties rather than emphasizing strategies designed to surmount. Complete problem definition, examination and development of alternatives lead consensus decisions on mutually agreeable solutions. The parties work toward general and super ordinate goals, i.e., ones that can only be attained by both parties pulling together. This approach requires a very high degree of persistence and dexterity in human relations and problem solving.

CONCLUSION

Conflict is a universal feature of a society and takes place everywhere between two individuals, groups, parties, organizations and even between countries. Conflicts are of various types such as economic, value, power, task and relationship; conflicts take place with regards to the economic sources, with the aim of attaining power and authoritative positions, values, norms, principles, practices and preferences, tasks, jobs, assignments and amongst relationships. Conflicts are not considered to be positive or negative, but when conflicting situations arise, it is the methodology of the people towards it that makes it good or bad; win-lose, lose-lose and win-win are the approaches to conflicts.

There have been different kinds of conflict resolution methods which are multilevel, multidisciplinary, multicultural, theoretical, practical, analytical and normative. The individuals have to possess certain attributes and skills regarding resolutions of conflicts such as developing positivity, being free of stress, considerate and thoughtful, they should be able to adequately recognize the conflicting requirements, the reason behind the occurrences of conflicting situations, one should be able to manage his emotions, make use of humor and play within conflicts and improve ones nonverbal communication skills. Finally, it can be stated that one should learn to avoid conflicts but if they take place one should be able to resolve them effectively by using dexterity, regulations and mutual understanding.

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