

Correlates of Spirituality as a Religious Offshoot to Conflict Management

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Abstract

Throughout the history of human evolution, one perception of human nature has been steady which is human nature and behavior. The rigid behavior sometimes leads to conflict. Conflict happens everywhere; however, it is completely natural which results in miscommunication, the difference in opinion or perspective, different objective or limited resources. In continuation to this, the present paper tries to explore the phenomenon of spirituality in the context of conflict management. The study makes an attempt to identify the causes of organizational and personal conflict and correlates the spirituality as a tool for conflict management. The primary objective of this paper is to understand conflict, its emergence, and effect on organizational performance. The paper has a descriptive approach in nature and has been generated through the data and facts collected from secondary sources. The study further can be continued by studying a large organization and its employees to extract realistic approach in the present scenario.

Keywords- Spirituality, Conflict, Religious Offshoots, Human Nature.

INTRODUCTION

Human resource as human capital is considered as the soul of any organization. Without human capital, no organization can function effectively. Throughout the history of human evolution, one perception of human nature has been steady which is the flexibility of human nature and behavior. The rigid behavior sometimes leads to conflict. In other words, if we have a set of individuals, we find that every individual is made up of some attributes owing to diversity in his or her behavior at different times. Now that difference in behavior does not always lead to positivity, but sometimes to the negativity and then emerges the conflict.

Conflict can be understood as a process that starts when an individual feels or believes that another individual has negatively affected or is about to affect something that is related to the interest of the him/her. In order to understand the conflict in the layman term, the simplest definition can be that conflict is the clash of interest between two or more individuals or group of individuals who want the same thing or have the same interest in a particular thing. When two entities want the same thing may be totally or partially and none of them are willing to give up, that critical situation gives birth to conflict.

Conflict happens everywhere; however, it is completely natural which results in miscommunication, the difference in opinion or perspective, different objective or limited resources. Conflict can happen at home with your parents, siblings, with co-workers at work or bosses, on social media. We all deal with conflict from little arguments or disagreement. Conflict affects our work at some time or another. Therefore, if we cannot tackle the hurdle of the conflict completely in our lives, how do we will make the best of these inevitable situations by being more aware. If there is a bunch of people together and ask them to achieve something, the chances are that there will be disagreements also. Conflict is a natural part of working in a team and it can occur for a number of reasons. There could be conflict caused by the process, overlapping roles or difference in opinions. Sometimes conflict can also be caused by external influences, but the primary reason is interpersonal conflict.

Conflict may occur among individual or among groups or at the organizational level. And it is not a matter of fear as it is an indispensable component of human behavior. Conflict is normal and it may exist at every level in the organization. According to the literature by Bisno (1988) the level of conflict starts increasing, efforts are made to contain least and it reaches the highest level.



Figure 1- Occurrence of Organizational Conflict

The above figure describes that how the conflict occurs in an organization. It starts with an awesome Vision to accomplish, the organizational management gathers some Smart People and they are Passionate about accomplishing the objectives. All of a sudden these smart people start having very different opinions and then their different opinion comes with strong emotions because they have got a lot of passion and they stuck between the conflict of who is right and who is wrong.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study and discuss the phenomenon of conflict in organizations.
2. To discuss the role of spirituality as a strategic precursor to conflict management.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research is a qualitative research which uses a descriptive approach. The conceptual research method has also been adopted to get a detailed literature review and deeper understanding of the subject. The foundation of theories and concepts of conflict management and spirituality has been reviewed from secondary data which have been sourced from different kinds of literature such as economic reports, various national and global agencies, journals, articles, books, websites, e-books and other reports.

Further, the researcher has gone through different websites to understand the concept and past efforts that have been done in the concerned field and also to assess the various theories, philosophies, and principles available to the related subject and literature made available by past researchers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Conventionally, the conflict has been viewed as a negative energy and it was synonymously used with terminologies such as violence, quarrel, destruction, and irrationality. Awan, A.G. and Saeed, S. (2015), in their research paper entitled “Conflict Management and Organisational Performance: A Case Study of Askari Bank Ltd”, discussed the major roots of conflict and conflict management strategies prevalent in the bank. The findings explored that the conflict management strategies differ with respect to the age, educational qualification of the respondents under study. No significant difference was found among the opinions of the males and females respondents with respect to numerous conflict management policies implemented by the bank management. But, the lack of cordial relationship between management and staff, perceptual variances, behavioural issues and lack of effective communication had been major sources of conflict between the banking staff.

Whereas, Martijn Jungst (2016) in his research paper entitled “Work Relationships: Counteracting the Negative Effects of Conflict” explained the negative correlation between conflict and performance which he also called task and relationship conflict. The conflict was found negatively related towards the performance of employees who didn’t have access towards social networks. The study also explored that when employees experience work conflict, they experience their involvement level very low or engaged in work because of having a feeling of unfriendly working atmosphere.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT

Organizations adopting a constructive approach towards conflict derive benefits from conflicts. There are organizations, there are bosses and there are top management people who actually create what are called as competitive conflicts. Within the organization, a competitive conflict is created which has a lot to do with each department and each division competing with the other. Thereby, there is a clash because of the availability of resources. The basic definition of management is the optimum utilization of available resources

and by going through the said definition we find that the resources are not available in abundance even in the well-managed companies. At any given point in time, there is a resource imbalance in companies. When the resource allocation is done through budgeting between related departments, there is a probability of emerging certain type of a healthy tug of war leading to a conflict. So each department has to prove that they can do their job with lesser resources than before. There emerges a lot of push and pull when the resources are not as per the expectations. Now the different departments involved in the task can knock their horns and they may get into a conflict because of the distribution of the resources.

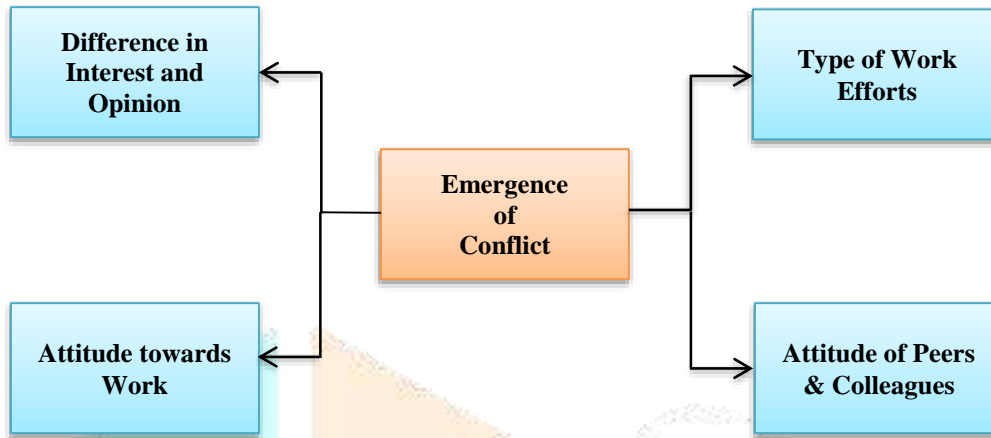


Figure 2 – Emergence of Conflict

From the above figure, it is evident that the emergence of conflict occurs due to four primary factors, i.e. Difference in Interest and Opinion, Attitude towards Work, Type of Work Efforts and Attitude of Peers & Colleagues

SPIRITUAL APPROACH TO CONFLICT

One of the most difficult things in this world today is to cooperate. And we are unaware of the core reason for not doing the same. We are unaware of the reasons that why is there a conflict between family members, between peoples of the same company, or of the same nation, conflict with people within the same religion not different religion? Practically, it's not all just about conflict, it's about Me and You or Us and Them.

From a spiritual perspective, the core root of that conflict is the conflict within our lives. Disharmony with the body and the mind itself. And ultimately, a disconnection between the body and the mind, the intelligence, and our true self, our hearts, our souls. So much of what we do is really disconnected from our own hearts, what to speak of our souls. Because we are so allured by external conceptions, misconceptions and our concerns that we forgot the larger picture or the higher principles that really life is about.

We all are very much affected by our environment and we all have choices who we are going to associate with and we are not going to associate with. And it's very important in our life on every level that we keep focus on a higher principal because if we are not focused on that hire principle, there are going to be so many temptations and so many fears and they are going to drag us down. The spiritual platform is when we actually connect to our source and to our souls. And we understand our relationship with the supreme source or with God, then we see more in terms of we. The more we empower each other, the more we are empowered and that's a higher version of conflict management. The lower version is let me push other people down so we could go up.

Conflict management strategies involve applying the methods to limit the negative effect of conflict and to raise the positive aspects of the conflict. Further, conflict management comprises planning effective strategies to bring down the conflict and refining the constructive functions of conflict.

NATURE'S APPROACH TO CONFLICT

The presence of conflict is an indication towards change that is needed. Alberta Fredricksen (2016) in an article entitled "Conflict Management on the Spiritual Path" has discussed that if we observe the natural wonder, we would come to know that how these splendid mountain ranges with jagged peaks, steep walls, waterfalls and deep lakes were formed? They were formed by the elements of earth upheavals, wind, and rain coming together in conflict. And sometimes violent encounters that changed things forever, with beautiful and undreamed of results. It was all part of the purification process for the earth itself. The conflicts, changes, and processes of life you go through with others are also forms of purification. They are the cotton, wool or silk you weave into your relationships. They become the yarn you use in fashioning the garment of your unique mission and path. The substance of your yarn is also woven into the lives of others because you walked with them for a while.

CONCLUSION

In one of the powerful sutras of the literature of Rishi Sutra called Vidayenamihih Vairinam it has been explored that anger increases by anger and passion by desires. In order to control the anger, firstly we must know the anger and its root of emergence. Some of the important conflict management strategies have been discussed below.



Figure 3 – Thomas-Kilmann Conflict (TKI) Mode of Conflict Management

From the figure 3, it is evident that there are five popular strategies for managing conflict effectively. The first strategy is Competing which is assertive and non-cooperative. It is a power-oriented mode of conflict management where an individual or group tries to win the situation by force. Whereas the second strategy is Collaboration that talks about a situation where there is a win-win opportunity for both the parties by collaborating their differences. The third strategy is Avoidance where one party does not concern any of the views and has no effect on the consequences. The fourth strategy, i.e. Accommodation which explores the method of gratitude and allows the other party to win rather than increasing the debate on who is right and who is wrong. This method of conflict resolution can also be understood as the opposite of the first one i.e. Competing. The fifth and the last strategy is Compromising which is considered to be the most effective and adaptive strategies among them all. Its objective is to find a solution which is mutually acceptable to both the parties involved in the conflict. It falls intermediate between the above discussed two strategies i.e. competing and accommodating.

One of the primary principles of managing conflict is by understanding that everyone is different and no two individuals are exactly alike, even if they are genetically identical twins that look exactly alike, won't have the same thoughts, feelings, personality traits and more. One of the important questions is that are conflicts avoidable? The answer is No. Conflicts will keep on coming again and again. The emergence of conflicts depends on the contingency of the situation, whereas the situation keeps on changing. Our reaction and respond to conflicts depends on the situation. Conflicts cannot be solved rather they can be resolved. The problem of conflict will keep on coming and we have to keep on solving them. And when we do something repeatedly, then it becomes a skill and when it becomes a skill, we reach a position to handle conflict in a much more effective in a better way.

The most affected person in a conflict is the one who runs away from it. And we can only be less affected by conflict from a less period of time only by practicing conflict management or conflict resolution skills. Many individuals in an organization or even in personal life avoid conflict or run away from conflict, thereby they do not expose themselves to learning the skills of conflict management. If we could expose ourselves to the skills development of conflict management, we will come to a conclusion that within us the fear of conflict is reduced and we will have the courage of approaching conflict situations and handling them effectively.

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