

Conflict

A number of groups are present in a community. So in addition to many other problems, a major problem of hostility is also found among them. Each group wants to defeat others and get power. Each one wants to get superiority, worth and high prestige. This negative situation creates hatred among the people and they become hostile to one another. They do not get ready to cooperate with others rather keep their differences continuing. In this way, conflicts arise in the community and most of its time, energy and resources get wasted in such negative practices.

The conflict may exist within a group of individuals or within the society among different groups. It may also exist among different people or between two societies or among the different motives of an individual. But sociologically speaking,

“Division of people into two or more groups which are antagonistic to one another i.e. the people do not cooperate but oppose one another, is known as conflict.”

(Or)

“Conflict is the social process in which individuals or groups seek their ends by directly challenging the antagonist by violence or threat of violence.”

(Or)

“Conflict is a process of seeking to monopolize rewards by eliminating or weakening the competitors”.

However, it is very difficult to draw a line between the social process competition and conflicts. But for understanding it can be said that when competition among individuals, groups, races and societies becomes tense, conscious and deliberate and they identify their opponents and their activities are destructive having dissociative relationship, it becomes a conflict.

Causes of Conflicts:

Following are the main reasons due to which conflicts arise:

1) Ethnic Consideration:

One factor creating conflict is ethnic consideration. As every community is divided into superiors and inferiors where inferiors are neglected in participating the facilities prevalent in the community. These inferiors and superiors take the shape of small groups. But the superiors do not like to mix with the inferiors or one group does not like to mix or cooperate with the other group. The result of which comes out in the form of conflict between them.

In the same way, the whole society is divided into the economic categories of haves and have nots. But in many of the communities the majority of population is poor, so the total resources are for the richer. The poor do not receive proper and appropriate part of the facilities and services. There is absence of social justice and, hence, conflicts arise in the society.

2) Age Factor:

In most of the communities the older people make decisions. They are considered to be the wise and proper figures of the communities. They think that to make good or bad decisions or suggestions is only their part not of the young ones. But, on the other hand, the young ones do not always accept their decisions. They want to adopt their own ways. Their young blood has emotions. They do not want the readymade solutions to be imposed on themselves. They resist their elders and, hence, conflict arises.

3) Abnormal Personality:

Ab means away and normal means usual, thus, abnormal means such personality which is away from normal. According to psychiatrists the energy and capacity of abnormal personalities is blocked up in their minds, they cannot perform their role in the society and cannot expose their energy to external environment. It is impossible for them to relate with other people and to do work. Rather a lot of their energy is locked up in the conflicts.

4) Unbalanced Power Structure:

The unbalanced power structure is also one of the major causes of conflict. The societies in which power and authority is in the hands of few persons and others are behind them or behind some leaders who have authority or in such societies the power structure is not democratic but authoritarian. In them the people are automatically divided into different small groups and these different groups will utilize the sources and resources in negative purposes. Because the distribution of power is not fair. There is monopoly over the facilities of life and the rules only work for their own egos and satisfaction due to which there exists a conflict within the society.

5) Defective Communication Structure:

Due to defective communicative structure there exists a conflict within the society because in the absence of proper communication, one group which wants to have good relationships with the other group cannot establish and then maintain such relationships.

Because there are a few people who bring all others behind them and use them in different harmful ways. They exploit one group against the other and do not let them be friends.

6) Lack of Education:

Another major factor creating conflicts is lack of education. The people are illiterate and ignorant, they are not familiar with their duties and rights and, therefore, they do not relate and cooperate with one another. They do not know the negative effects of the conflicts because it is the education which tells or teaches us the different things to lead our lives or we can say that it is education through which we understand the different rights and duties. So the lack of education or illiteracy worsens the situation and the conflict comes out.

Some other causes of conflict include:

- Political Affiliations
- Various Occupations
- Religious Considerations
- Land
- Property etc.

Types of Conflicts:

A large number of conflicts exist in every society even if it is a modern, atomic or highly advanced society but following are the most important types of them:

1) Economic Conflicts:

Economic conflict is found among the employees and employers because of the strikes of employees in different industries. The employees have their own unions to fulfill their demands. So when an employee finds that his rights are not being fulfilled properly then he approaches to the union for the achievement of his demands and legal needs. But if the union does not succeed to achieve their objectives which are true or false, good or bad, then these demands and needs are to be enforced through strikes and demonstrations. While, on the other hand, the industrialists retaliate through locking up the factories and industries which may further destitute the social relationships.

2) Religious Conflicts:

In religious conflicts we find sectarian conflicts or religious conflicts i.e. Hindu-Muslim and Sunni riots in Indo-Pakistan subcontinent are the examples of religious conflicts. Though every religion teaches toleration and brotherhood, yet the ideological variations and to glorify one's religious teachings mainly erupt major religious conflicts. There have been even wars, forced conversions and migrations in history in the name of religion.

3) Educational Conflicts:

This type of conflict is found in educational institutions. There are strikes and demonstrations against educational authorities which result in serious conflicts. The strikes of the teachers are also one of the causes of such conflicts.

4) Class Conflicts:

There are different classes in the social ladder of society. The upper classes generally exploit the lower classes for their own benefit and block the the progress and prosperity of the lower classes. This exploitation may be challenged by the down-trodden classes and may result in class conflict. The tenants and the landlords' and the labourers and industrialists' conflicts fall in this category.

5) Racial Conflicts:

The presence of different races in a country brings about racial conflicts. The countries like United States of America, England and South Africa are facing these racial problems, where minorities like Negroes and the Orientals are discriminated by the Whites. This type of segregation and discrimination results in racial riots or conflicts. It should be clear that in certain cases the Whites are in minority, as in South Africa, but still they are the exploiters. The major causes are political, economic and racial which bring different races into competition and ultimately result in conflicts.

6) Political Conflicts:

In democratic countries the possibilities of political conflicts are generally less, but still the different parties remain in conflict in respect of political issues. The revolutions and snatching the political power through force are also called as political conflicts. In the same way, in most of the countries a party after getting hold of power annihilates the political opponents. Similarly the political conflicts may be prevalent among different countries, which may result in disastrous wars.

7) War:

War is the most destructive form of conflict and it had been present in every past civilization. The reasons for war may be economic gains or differences in religious ideologies or dominance or encroachment of other's territory. There can be hundred and one reasons for this type of conflict, which work collectively to initiate it. But it should not be forgot that it is the most devastating form of conflict the result of which is always the great human and material destruction.

However, some other conflicts include:

- Recreational Conflicts
- Ideological Conflicts
- Occupational Conflicts
- Inter-community and Intra-community Conflicts

Role of Community Worker to Resolve the Conflict:

The community worker should try to resolve the conflict through the following ways:

1. The worker should be able to diagnose and understand the nature of the conflict.
2. When the worker understands the nature of conflict, he/she should try to build bridges against it.
3. He/she should try to collect some persons who are interested in peace.

4. If the conflict is beyond the scope and approach of the community worker, then he/she should not touch it and try to wait for the suitable time when he/she becomes able to apply his/her approach.
5. He/she should try to create social justice in the community. This helps much to kick out the conflict.
6. He/she should try to create the situation of cooperation among people having different occupations and ideas.
7. One suggestion has been given by Alinsky. He says that the people in authority are few and the followers are in majority. Therefore, the leadership should be arisen from the community's majority. They should be organized and able to make decisions. The depressed classes should be mobilized and they should have the zeal for betterment. Their interests should be arisen through the process of integration. The worker should try to locate their common goals and should mobilize them towards those common goals. In this way the conflict can easily be resolved.
8. An other suggestion was given by Ried to eradicate the conflicting situation from the community. He says that the community worker should try to divide the community into different sectors or units and should try to start programme in each sector. Each sector should has its own leader who will work out a line of action with the help of whole group. In this way, he/she will be able to fulfill his/her wish in small groups in the best way. But after some time the programme should be made again because with the passage of time and changing leaderships, the needs and problems of the people also change.

The worker should also try to change their ideas through motivation and try to integrate them some common ideas. Take some persons from each group and try to arrange some programme for them. Thus they will think about the whole area and will not become monopolistic in their own ideas and suggestions.
9. Herbert Thaler has also given a suggestion to resolve the conflicts from the society. He says that the communication channel should be open because the people who are not in the centre of conflict between two groups they appreciate the group where they go and thus aggravate the situation. Therefore, the people should be made conscious so that they may compromise with one another. In this way, the problem can be removed successfully.