

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACE BUILDING

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UNIVERSITY

**School of Social Sciences
Indira Gandhi National Open University
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi**

EXPERT COMMITTEE

Prof. D. Gopal (**Chairman**)
Head, Centre for Gandhi and Peace
Studies Programme Coordinator
SOSS, IGNOU, New Delhi

Prof. R.P. Mishra
Former Vice Chancellor
Allahabad University, Allahabad

Dr. Anil Dutta Mishra
Dy. Director
Gandhi Sangralay, New Delhi

Dr. Ashu Pasricha
Director, Gandhi Bhavan and
Chairperson, Department Gandhian
and Peace Studies Panjab University,
Chandigarh

Prof. Anurag Joshi
Faculty of Political Science
SOSS, IGNOU
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi

Prof. S.V.S. Reddy
Faculty of Political Science
SOSS, IGNOU, Maidan Garhi,
New Delhi

Prof. Jagpal Singh
Faculty of Political Science
SOSS, IGNOU, Maidan Garhi,
New Delhi

Course Coordinator: Prof. Darvesh Gopal, Faculty of Political Science & Chair and Head Centre for Gandhi and Peace Studies

Prof. Anurag Joshi, Faculty of Political Science, SOSS, IGNOU, New Delhi

Editor(s): Prof. Abdul Nafey, JNU, New Delhi & Prof. Darvesh Gopal, SOSS, IGNOU, New Delhi

Unit Vetting, Formatting, Revision & Updating: Dr. Maheep, Academic Associate, SOSS, IGNOU, New Delhi

BPSE-146 COURSE DEVELOPMENT TEAM

S. No. Name and Address of the unit writer

Block 1 Conflict: Theoretical Constructs

- | | | | |
|----|--|--------|------------------------------------|
| 1. | Dr. Gursharan Dhanjal
Editor & DEO, Skock Group
Gurugram – 122001 | Unit 1 | Meaning and Concept of
Conflict |
| 2. | Prof. Sudhir Jacob George
Former Head & Chairman,
Deptt. of Political Science
Central University of Hyderabad | Unit 2 | Sources of Conflict |
| 3. | Prof. Abdulrahim P. Vijapur
Deptt. of Political Science
Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh | Unit 3 | Types and Level of Conflicts |
| 4. | Prof. Kaushikee
Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and
Conflict Resolution (NMCPCR),
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi | Unit 4 | Theories of Conflict |

Block 2 Conflict Management

- | | | | |
|----|--|--------|--|
| 5. | Prof. Samir Kumar Das
Professor of Political Science
University of Kolkata, Kolkata | Unit 5 | Methods of Conflict
Resolution |
| 6. | Prof. A. S. Narang

Dr. Jyoti, Assistant Professor
Deptt. of Journalism,
Kamala Nehru College
Delhi University, New Delhi | Unit 6 | Role of Government and
Civil Society |
| 7. | Prof. Abdulram P. Vijapur
Deptt. of Political Science
Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh | Unit 7 | Role of International and
Trans-National Institutions |

Block 3 Peace Building

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 8. | Prof. C.S.R. Murthy
Chairman & Head
Centre for International Politics,
Organisation Disarmament
School of International Studies
JNU, New Delhi | Unit 8 Meaning and Significance |
| 9. | Prof. Kaushikee
Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace
and Conflict Resolution
(NMCPCR), Jamia Millia Islamia,
New Delhi | Unit 9 Approaches |
| 10. | Dr. Vijay Sakhuja
National Maritime Foundation
Varuna Complex, Airport Road,
NH-8, New Delhi | Unit 10 Post –Conflict Construction
and Rehabilitation (Case
Studies – Local, Sub –
National and International) |

Block 4 Contemporary Peace Initiative

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 11. | Dr. (Ms.) Ashu Pasricha
Assistant Professor
Deptt of Gandhian Studies
Panjab University, Chandigarh | Unit 11 Inter –Faith Dialogue |
| 12. | Dr. Avanish Patil
Assistant Professor
Deptt. of History, Shivaji University
Kolhapur | Unit 12 Peace Initiative Models (King,
Mandela, Sharp, Bhavé and
JP) |

PRINT PRODUCTION

Mr. Rajiv Girdhar
Assistant Registrar (Pub.)
MPDD, IGNOU, New Delhi
Mr. Suresh Bishnri

Mr. Hemant Parida
Section Officer (Pub.)
MPDD, IGNOU, New Delhi

Secretarial Assistance
Vijender, Stenographer
School of Social Sciences
IGNOU, New Delhi

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

Conflict Resolution and Peace Building (BPSE-146) is the course aimed at equipping students with an understanding of the changing dynamics of conflict and wars in the 21st century, so as to analyse the prospects for peace.

The contemporary globalised world in the last two decades has witnessed the emergence of many new conflicts across the world. At the same time, a number of long running conflicts remain unresolved. Pessimists even predict the emergence of new wars as climate change, shrinking natural resources like water, economic instability, large scale migration among other factors, continue to make the world more unstable and fragile. Thereby the need for peace has never been more urgent. Indeed, without peace, neither development nor the survival of the human species or our environment will be possible. However, to find mechanisms to resolve the varied conflicts and build peace, it is first important to understand the conflicts that rage around us. In many ways, conflicts are an inevitable part of our lives. What is important is to find ways for resolution of conflict non-violently, so that two or more parties find a peaceful solution to the disagreement among them.

The course thus begins by helping students understand the basic concepts of conflict and peace building. It explores the types of conflict, causes behind conflict, methods to resolve conflict. Students will be introduced to the different meanings, and approaches to peace and conflict resolution. For example, the general understanding of peace as absence of war is insufficient. Similarly, just management or settlement of a conflict does not necessarily mean that the conflict has been resolved satisfactorily for all the parties involved in it. What must be achieved is sustainable peace. Students thereby will be equipped with a comprehensive understanding of concepts and issues, so that appropriate effort can be made for achievement of sustainable peace at all levels.

The course is divided into four Blocks. The first Block introduces students to the theoretical constructs of conflict; the second Block focuses on conflict management, while the third and fourth Block looks at peace building and contemporary peace initiative respectively.

Block 1 consist of four units (1 to 4), Unit 1 introduces the meaning and concepts of conflict. It explains the life cycle of a conflict, the process of its development, and differentiates between conflict prevention, management and settlement; between violent and non-violent conflicts. It also describes various causes of conflicts and their nature.

Unit 2 on sources of conflict further expands some of the issues highlighted in previous unit. It discusses in detail different types of conflict and what lies at its root, be it material, ideological and motivational. Under these are discussed economic, value, power, and ineffective communication that lead to escalation of conflicts. The Unit further describes Inter-personal, inter-group, multi-party and international conflicts. This Unit goes on to illustrate various types of threats in international arena, which cause, or sometimes restrict escalation of conflicts. These include threats of punishment, conquest, annihilation, possession of offensive and defensive weapons, and boundary disputes.

Unit 3 discusses various types and levels of conflict. The Unit begins with the conceptual clarification of the concept in view of its various definitions. It also describes various objectives and functions of conflict both in terms of negative and positive aspects. There is detailed discussion on types and levels of conflict. Various classifications of the types have been provided by experts and scholars. These include classifications of Quincy Wright, Anton Rapoport, Singer, K.J. Holster, Stuart Chare, Kenneth Bouding, John Galtung, and Dennis Sandaled. Some differentiate in terms of conflicting parties, others in terms of conflicting issues, but often these lists are not rigidly divided and diverse categories blur with each other.

Unit 4 describes various theories of conflict. It makes students aware of theories based in Human Nature and Society. In Human Nature based theories, are included Biological and Socio-Biological theories, Psychological and Social Psychological theories; Society based theories include social process, social structural, structural violence, human needs, resource, relative deprivation and socio-economic theories.

Block 2 consisting of **Units 5 to 7** which are designed for students to understand conflict management. It thereby covers the methods of resolving conflict, and the role government, civil society, media and international or transnational institutions can play to do so.

Unit 5 examines the different methods of conflict resolution. After recapitulating differences between various kinds of conflicts, it distinguishes between conflict management, conflict settlement, conflict transformation and conflict resolution. Each of these can be considered as an end in itself depending on the situation or a step towards ultimate goal of conflict resolution. There has been a change in the nature of conflicts over time. This is particularly so after the end of Cold War, and more so with globalization and Information Communication Technology revolution. Therefore, methods of conflict resolution need to take note of these.

In **Unit 6** is described the role of government and civil society. The government being an agency empowered with use of force is responsible to maintain peace and order within territorial limits of a state (country). It is in states that conflicts keep on emerging between individuals, groups, communities, classes, etc. In some cases some groups may rise in conflict against the state itself. The state is required to manage and resolve all types of conflicts. These can be managed and settled by use of force, mediation between groups, adjudication, commands, etc. In cases of groups in conflict against state there can be suppression by use of full might of the state, negotiations with the group, understanding of their grievances, and accommodation of their demands, use of good offices of local, regional or even outside-nation individuals, institutions or agencies. The Unit also discusses the limitations on States and challenges these face, particularly, in the present age where issues of human rights violations, abuse of police powers, allegations of discrimination etc. have become matters of concern at civil society level within states and in the community of nations.

This Unit further describes the role of civil society and media. In the present age of democracy, information and communication revolution, international community's expression for justice and non-discrimination, civil society has emerged as a conscious keeper of societies. Complimentary and supplementary to civil society is the media – print, electronic and social. Both civil society and

media can be neutral observers of conflicts and as such play an important role in establishing communication between parties in conflicts, put pressure on them to negotiate and settle in the wider interest of peace and larger society. The Unit apart from discussing those issues also delineates upon the type and nature of civil society and media that can play such role. There, of course, are limits of and challenges for both civil society and media.

Unit 7 delineates the role of International and transnational institutions in conflict management and resolutions. In this unit, you will read about the role played by United Nations Organisation (UNO) in maintaining international peace-keeping and security since World War II and the challenges it faces today. In addition, the Unit also discusses the role of some other international organisations like North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) as a regional organisation; United Nations mandated Agency University of Peace and some International Non-governmental organisations. The role played by those agencies specific situations of conflict in countries like the Korean War, Palestine Issue, the Suez Crisis, the Hungarian and Czechoslovakia crisis, the Iraq-Iran war, Sierra Leone and some others have been highlighted.

The Unit also takes note of the serious threats terrorism is posing to the international security and discusses various steps initiated by U.N. and other agencies to counter the menace. By going through this Unit you will be able to appreciate the importance of international cooperation for peace-keeping and conflict resolution as also the limitations. The unit brings out the shortcomings in the present system and makes some useful suggestions for a more useful role of these agencies.

Block 3 consists of Units 8 to 10 which focus on peace building. The scope of this block is to make students understand the meaning and significance of peace, the different approaches to peace building, and the post-conflict construction and rehabilitation with case studies.

Unit 8 emphasizes the importance of peace for Human Survival and Development. The Unit takes note of mankind's long drawn search for an ideal society and the challenges it faces at present juncture. The Unit discusses the importance of peace for human survival, development and security. It makes students aware of the meaning of security in its various facets, particularly, human security. It emphasizes the human centered paradigm of security rather than a state-centric one. For that, it highlights the essentiality of peace in positive sense.

Unit 9 describes the approaches to peace building. It elaborates on peace building as a long-time effort that requires diligent designing and painstaking execution from different perspectives. It explains the different approaches put forward by important proponents in the field, and highlight different dimensions of peace building – political, social, economic, administrative, structural, or transformative.

Unit 10 focuses on the phase when the gun have fallen silent, and enable you to understand the dynamics of post-conflict re-construction and rehabilitation in order to achieving the overarching goals of sustainable peace and prosperity. It explains the different definition of the post-conflict re-construction and rehabilitation, highlights the different actors and stakeholders involves, and illustrates the process of re-construction and rehabilitation process through the case study of the Sri Lanka in the post-LTTE period.

Block 4 in contemporary peace initiatives in units 11 and 12 looks at Inter – Faith Dialogue, and Peace Initiative Models.

Unit 11 discusses some initiatives taken by spiritual, religious and other concerned for avoidance of communal or cultural conflicts through inter-religious dialogue. The unit highlights the importance of understanding and appreciating each other's religion, their ethos and values and brings out commonalities towards living in peace. There have been inter-religious and inter-faith dialogues in different places, shapes and levels. These include the dialogue of life, the dialogue of communication (social), theological dialogue (discourses) and dialogue of religious experience. You will read about some specific dialogues held in different places in world. Role and efforts by some specific institutions and organisations have also been discussed. You will also read about the criticism, particularly by some religious persons, about the futility of such exercises

Last unit in this block **Unit 12** is on individual initiatives. In this you will read contributions of five important persons – Vinoba Bhave, Jai Prakash Narain and Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Gene Sharp. All of them were influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's vision of non-violence to build and maintain peace. The basic Gandhian understanding inherited by these activists was that social structural forces that give rise to oppression needs to be highlighted and tackled. In this unit you will read about movements like Bhoodan and Gramdan introduced by Vinoba Bhave, winning hearts and Total revolution propounded by Jai Prakash Narain, anti apartheid movement of Mandela, various movements for justice for blacks started and lead by Martin Luther, or Sharp's influence. All these were aimed at attaining peace and justice by eliminating social oppression and economic exploitation and addressing the suffering and misery of people without violence. The message is that peace movements do not only try to resolve conflicts between nation states and different groups within states but also try to provide justice, equality and livelihood to the oppressed.

Through the above 12 units of this course as a whole you will be introduced to various concepts and definitions related to peace, conflict and peace building. There are various approaches to study the subject as also processes to manage and resolve conflicts and build peace. It is important to understand them. In next blocks you will study in some detail the applications of these concepts and approaches at ground level. With theoretical and conceptual clarity and understanding of situations and issues involved you can contribute in the process of peace building which the need of the hour.

You are advised to go through these units to gain a preliminary overview of the general contours of the overarching theme of the subject matter.

The background of the page features a large, light gray watermark of the Open University logo. The logo consists of a stylized 'U' on the left and the text 'Open University' on the right, with 'THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY' written below it. A thin vertical line separates the logo from the main text.

BLOCK 1
CONFLICT: THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS

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UNIT 1 MEANING AND CONCEPT OF CONFLICT*

Structure

Introduction

Aims and Objectives

Defining Conflict

Conflict Stages

The Life Cycle of a Conflict

Crisis Prevention

Conflict Management

Crisis Management

Conflict Settlement

Conflict Resolution

Conflict Transformation

Peace Building

Conflict Categories

Non-Violent Conflicts

Violent Conflicts

Conflict Issues

Territory and Border-Conflicts

Minority, Ethnic and Government-Power Conflicts

Conflicts Over Resources

Let Us Sum Up

Some Useful References

Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

INTRODUCTION

In our daily lives, we are all involved in a number of conflicts. Sometimes, the conflicts may be small. For example, a person may ignore us while we are talking. Sometimes, the conflict may be more serious. For instance, two individuals may get into a fight and start behaving violently towards each other. Whether big or small, conflict is not confined only to individuals and the people around them. Conflict can also arise among those who are not associated with each other. A conflict can, for example, arise between people and the prevailing laws. Besides, conflict can also arise at the national and international level. Thus conflict can be internal among individuals within a community, between individuals. It can also be external conflicts between individuals or groups outsiders.

Conflict is endemic to all social life. It is an inevitable part of living because it is related to situations of scarce resources, division of functions, power relations and role-differentiation. Because of its ubiquity and pervasive nature, the concept has acquired a multitude of meanings and connotations. The normative concept of conflict, influenced by preoccupation with stability and equilibrium in organisational/national design, links conflict to violence, destruction, inefficiency

and irrationality. Using the term in a broad sense it may be suggested that conflict refers to all kinds of antagonistic or hostile interactions. More specifically, it can be termed as a situation in which two or more parties have incompatible objectives, where their perceptions and behaviour are also equally incompatible. In this unit we will discuss various aspects and types of conflict and the need to contain them.

Aims and Objectives

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- define conflict and its stages;
- understand the life cycle of a conflict;
- understand the process of developments of conflicts;
- differentiate between conflict prevention, management and settlement;
- distinguish between violent and non-violent conflicts; and
- describe various causes of conflicts and their nature.

DEFINING CONFLICT

Conflict refers to more than just overt behavior. If we merely concentrate on the obvious behavioural manifestation of conflict, it will limit our understanding. The three-dimensional conception of conflict requires that we consider the entire situation in which parties (individuals, groups, organisations or nations) come to possess contradictory goals, their structure of interaction and the nature of their goals. We have to consider emotional (distrust) and cognitive (stereotyping) orientations that accompany a conflict situation, as well as the range of action undertaken by any party in a situation of conflict.

The perception of threat, or actual occurrence of conflict, is necessary for the initiation of

WHAT IS CONFLICT?

- **A social process when two or more parties have or perceive a difference in goals, values, or difference in position taken on issues**
- **Can occur at multiple levels: interpersonal, groups, intergroup, organizational, national and international levels.**
- **Three dimensions of Conflict: *Behavioural*; *Emotional* implying feelings of disputants *Cognitive* or how a disputant perceives the conflict. All three must be addressed to resolve conflict.**

conflict prevention or management measures. Hence it is essential to understand the concept of conflict before exploring how to prevent and manage such occurrences.

As per the traditional definition of conflict, it is the result of opposing interests involving scarce resources, goal divergence and frustration. Conflict is not defined simply in terms of violence (behaviour) or hostility (attitudes), but also includes incompatibility or differences on positions taken about an issue. Such a definition is designed to move beyond traditional military conflict, and include other behavioural dimensions.

When discussing the concept of conflict, the perception of those involved should be included as a central concept since conflicts and the opponent's intentions often are defined according to subjective perceptions. For example, there could be an abundance of space for agreement in a conflict. However if the parties perceive the conflict as being impossible to resolve or consider the opponent to be untrustworthy, this might not help in resolving the conflict. The normative disputes are also left out of the rational definitions. These disputes involve religion, values and beliefs and do not always have a military outcome. In brief, conflict means: perceived differences in issue positions between two or more parties at the same moment in time.

It assumes a violent dimension when: (i) there is no superior force or effective regulatory mechanism to balance the struggle and thus prevent the situation from becoming more intense, and (ii) the parties involved employ physical force or lethal means to inflict injury and damage, or to eliminate the opponent in the quest to secure the value(s) at stake.

Check Your Progress Exercises 1

Note: i) Use of the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

1) What are the essential principles of representation in a liberal democracy?

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CONFLICT STAGES

There is general agreement on four basic stages of conflict. These stages are not mutually exclusive and therefore, an individual/organisation/nation may be involved in more than one at a time.

- **Intrapersonal:** conflict within the individual/organisation/nation (for example, who cannot make decisions).
- **Interpersonal:** conflict among two or more individuals/organisations/nations (for example, an argument between the two parties).
- **Intragroup:** conflict within the members of same group.
- **Intergroup:** conflict between two or more groups (for example, between two different camps of groups or nations).

THE LIFE CYCLE OF A CONFLICT

A conflict is not a static situation, but a dynamic one – the intensity level changes over a conflicts' life cycle. An understanding of the conflict cycle is essential for an understanding of how, where and when to apply different strategies and measures of conflict prevention and management. Over time, numerous

suggestions and models of conflict patterns have been put forward. Conflicts tend to be described as cyclical in regard to their intensity levels, i.e., escalating from situation of negative peace or unstable peace, into crisis and war. Thereafter, it de-escalates into unstable peace. Most scholars agree that these cycles are recurring. What can break the cycle is positive peace. Thus, peace is not simply equal to absence of violence, but rather a situation of so-called “positive” peace.

In principle, conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution are regarded as applicable in different phases of a conflict. In sum, conflict prevention measures are designed for the early phases, before a conflict has become manifest. Management measures are applied in later phases when a conflict is manifest, but before the violence has occurred. Conflict resolution could, on the other hand, be applied in the de-escalation phase after a violent conflict has occurred.

The life cycle of conflict presented here includes both the conflict process itself and possible prevention, management and resolution measures. There are five levels of conflict intensity (stable peace, unstable peace, open conflict, crisis and war). Stable peace is a situation where tension between the parties is low and there exists different forms of connections and cooperation between them, often including economic and environmental cooperation, as well as cooperation on other non-sensitive issue areas.

Example: Recurring Cycle of Conflict In Afghanistan



Unstable Peace: The Cold War brought in competing U.S. and Soviet interest in Afghanistan- both creating their own circle of influence among Afghan political elites. In 1973, the Durrani monarchy was ousted, and a series of coup followed. Phase of unstability ensued as power kept changing from one group to another.

Crisis: 1978, Saur Revolution. Government of Daoud Khan overthrown by Soviet supported People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan. Infighting began between pro communist (supported by soviet Union, and anti (supported by U.S.A).

War: Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan.

Unstable Peace: After fighting Soviets, various warlords/extremist groups emerged vying for control of the country. By the mid-1990s, fundamentalist group Taliban took control, ruling according to Islamic Shari’a.

Crisis (again): *Taliban created an environment for terrorist like Al Qaeda. On September 11, 2001, Al Qaeda terrorists launched attacks against the United States.*

War (again): *Post 9/11, U.S led bombing of Afghanistan in 2001. Taliban dislodged, new government formed, NATO takes over security.*

Unstable Peace (again): *Escalating violence, from 2014 downsizing of US/ NATO troops, disputed Presidential elections, back to period of uncertainty.*

During a period of unstable peace, tension has increased. This is a situation where though there is negative peace, the tension between the parties is so high that peace no longer guaranteed. An open conflict is the stage when the conflict has come out in the open and can be observed. The parties have also begun to take measures to deal with it, even if militarised options are the preferred or the likely option. Crisis is the phase when war has become imminent, but hasn't yet broken out. In the war phase, there is widespread and intense violence. In the de-escalation phase the pattern is reversed, moving from war to crisis, through open conflict and unstable peace to finally reach a situation of stable peace.

Just as the phases of the conflict cycle are important, the connection between conflict prevention and conflict and crisis managing needs to be developed further.

Crisis Prevention

There are many conflict prevention measures. In times of stable and unstable peace, preventive measures aim to strengthen the system's structure, which is needed for peaceful dealing with conflicts. However, conflict prevention measures are effective only during the phase of stable and unstable peace, i.e. before a conflict has become manifest. Here it is important to differentiate between structural and direct preventive measures. Structural measures are best applied during the stable peace phase. They consist of structural measures, aimed at specific groups or issues such as economic development, political participation or cultural autonomy. The benefit of applying structural measures during the early stage is that their acceptance tends to be higher when suspicion between the actors is low. Hence more far reaching and institutional measures can be implemented. The more pronounced a conflict becomes the more specific measures it requires.

In the unstable peace phase, the direct preventive measures are directed at issues with a shorter-term goal in mind, i.e., to reduce tension and create trust between the actors. Simultaneously, the window of opportunity for longer-term initiatives, such as the building of institutions, fades away slowly and the conflict becomes more issue specific and more costly in financial and political terms. Direct preventive measures can, for example, be formal or informal workshops dealing with the possible conflict issues. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, former Secretary-General of the UN, has defined preventive diplomacy as "the use of diplomatic techniques to prevent disputes arising, prevent them from escalating into armed conflict...and prevent the armed conflict from spreading."

Conflict Management

Fred Tanner has defined conflict management as the limitation, mitigation and/or containment of a conflict without necessarily solving it. Niklas Swanstrom

adds to this definition and argues that conflict management should imply a change, from destructive to constructive, in the mode of interaction. William Zartman has argued that conflict management refers to eliminating violent and violence-related actions and leaving the conflict to be dealt with on the political level.

Conflict management and crisis management do involve tactics that are enforced when violent conflict is deemed likely (conflict management) or imminent (crisis management), but before a situation escalates into war. Conflict management can be enforced, as soon as the conflict has been identified by the actors, as an effort to reduce tension and prevent further escalation. Direct measures, such as reduction of military forces, third party intervention, informal and formal communication of general confidence building measures (CBMs), can be designed to handle the conflict and reverse destructive behaviour into constructive. The measures are often bilateral as questions many times are sensitive and not seen as threatening at this stage. However, multilateral forums, such as the UN are increasingly being used.

Crisis Management

Crisis management is employed in the short timeframe before a war is to erupt, when the conflict escalates rapidly and the time for management measures is limited. This period is characterised by a scarcity of time and other resources to address the conflict, as well as inadequate information. Crisis management entails more drastic measures than crisis management and aims at containing the outbreak of militarised conflict with all available means. Examples of such measures include third party intervention by actors such as NATO or the UN. Some analysts also view preventive strikes as possible conflict and crisis management measures.

During the stage of war, neither prevention nor management is possible. Military means are used as a primary tool, even if political, economic and social tools are used simultaneously to decrease the opponent's willingness/or capability to fight. At this stage, the actors either have to fight things out until reaching a so-called hurting stalemate where both parties realise the need to end the conflict or peace has to be enforced by external actors.

Conflict Settlement

The concept of conflict settlement covers all conflict strategies that aim at definite end of the direct violence, without necessarily addressing the basic causes of the conflict. Conflict is seen here as a result of some existing incompatible interests or a result of a struggle for scarce resources or power. Thus, conflict is understood as zero-sum game. Yet, as the neo-realistic works show, this zero-sum game can be broken depending on the involved parties' interests and the stage of the conflict escalation. Most strategies incorporate a range of peaceful measures like negotiations, mediation or facilitation, as well as coercive measures as military, political or economic sanctions including the threat with them. While latter measures usually are of short-term character, the peaceful measures are the basis for a long-term perspective of the conflict settlement.

Conflict Resolution

The conflict resolution approaches also point out strategies that could be employed to find an exit from the conflict's destroying dynamic and that aim toward achieving satisfying solution for all parties involved. The process of conflict

management is the foundation for more effective conflict resolution. A distinction between conflict management and conflict resolution is, however, needed as a starting point as the concepts often are confused or integrated. Conflict resolution refers to the resolution of the underlying incompatibilities in a conflict and mutual acceptance of each party's existence, while conflict management refers to measures that limit, mitigate and/or contain a conflict without necessarily solving it.

It is, of course, possible to resolve differences in issue positions without going to war. Indeed, the Cuban missile crisis, the dispute in Cyprus, the border conflicts between China and Kyrgyzstan are all examples of conflicts and crisis that were handled or resolved before war erupted.

Conflict Transformation

Conflict transformation is relatively new concept in peace studies. It is based on the understanding that conflict should not be treated as an isolated event which can be managed or resolved. Instead it is integral to any society's development and evolution. For instances, women's rights to vote has also emerged out of conflict (albeit a non violent one) which pushed society to change. Conflict thereby is not always negative. It can also be a positive force. What is important is that it is non violent. The approach of conflict transformation is not simply to try and contain or manage conflict but to try and transform the root cause of a particular conflict. Such an approach is particularly relevant for intractable conflicts, where there are deep-rooted issues that fuel protracted violence. It seeks to addresses structural, behavioural and attitudinal aspects of conflict. It stresses on interdependence, and the compatibility of human interests. For conflict transformation to occur, tension and violence between the warring parties must have be overcome by ensuring that all actors recognize that violence will lead not serve anyone interest. They should also arrive at a consensus about how to bring about this transformation. Conflict transformation invariable involves a third party who can help the actors overcome their hostilities, and alter their emotional and cognitive views possible only then when structural and/or cultural violence forms exist. Therefore, every peace process that aims to stop forms of direct violence without, in doing so, dealing with social, economic and cultural structures, will be short-sighted. This point is further developed by the process-structure gap. Since peace is to be understood neither as process nor as structure alone, though both its structural and process dimension must always be considered. So, the understanding of peace only as a process often prevails during the practical conflict dealings. In this context, the "peace alliance" concept takes a central place in the transformation research.

Peace Building

Initially, the focus is on separating the actors and preventing further mistake or deliberate escalation (peace keeping). This stage is comparable to the crisis stage in the escalation phase and often involves third party actors that assist with peacekeeping or monitoring. There is still a risk for escalation, but no imminent threat of war. When the conflict has de-escalated further, a phase of peace building follows, which gives room for more long-term measures. Finally, if the peace building efforts meet with success, the conflict moves to the peace consolidation phase where the aim is to build more cooperation and create an inclusive peace for all involved parties.

The measures used in the de-escalation phase are often much more financially and politically demanding than pro-active measures in the escalation phase. Furthermore, measures taken after a war often have to involve third parties, like the UN or stronger military actors that can guarantee security for all the actors involved, which is not to the same extent in the escalation phase.

Key Points

- **Conflict Cycle:** Five levels of conflict intensity -stable peace, unstable peace, open conflict, crisis and war.
- **Conflict Prevention:** Short term measures take during phase of stable and unstable peace, to prevent escalation of potential or imminent violent conflict.
- **Conflict Management:** Used during the phase of crisis when violent conflict seems likely or imminent. It aims at eliminating violent and violence-related actions so that the conflict can be dealt at a political level.
- **Conflict Settlement:** Refers to strategies aimed at ending direct violence, and reaching an agreement through measures like negotiations, mediation or coercive measures as military, political or economic sanctions. Does not address cause of conflict.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Aimed at resolution of the underlying incompatibilities in a conflict, promoting mutual acceptance of each party's existence.
- **Conflict Transformation:** Seeks to move beyond managing, resolving conflict to developing healthy relationship between individual and communities (positive peace).
- **Peace Building:** Refers to resolving a conflict in such a way that both parties are satisfied, encouraging them to move from a zero sum game to a win-win situation. It often requires outside party facilitating the resolution process.

Check Your Progress Exercises 2

Note: i) Use of the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) What are the life cycles of conflict? How is crisis prevention different from crisis management?

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CONFLICT CATEGORIES

Research into the sources and categories of conflict have usually centered around two conflict approaches: the subjectivist and the objectivist approach. The objectivist approach looks for the origin of conflict in the social and political

make-up and structure of society, with the understanding that the goals at stake are compatible. On the contrary, the subjectivist point of view focuses primarily on the perceived incompatibility. The level of incompatibility between the conflicting parties is the most important variable that impacts the intensity of the dispute, and dynamic of conflict phases. Once conflict has emerged, it develops further with certain dynamic and intensity changing its courses and stages. In that sense understanding developing stages of conflict and their categorization is crucial. It can provide indications of what may happen next, and what can facilitate the conflict management.

Consequently, the conflicts can be divided into two main categories: non-violent and violent conflicts. The major shortcoming in the conflict literature is that most studies and available data concentrate on violent conflicts, particularly wars. Thus, there is lack of information and research on non-violent conflicts. For sake of clarity, we will attempt to classify the two as follows:

Non-Violent Conflicts

Absence of violence does not automatically mean absence of conflict. Conflicting interests can be pursued without violence or coercion. When conflict already exists, parties do not always use force or start with the use of force against each other. Yet, the existence of non-violent conflict must be noticed and recognized by the outside world, as well as by at least one of the involved parties. In addition, it should be stressed that violent escalation in every conflict evolves from a non-violent phase of the conflict. Non-violent conflict has been termed as manifest conflict process. It is defined as a situation in which at least two parties, or their representatives, try to pursue their perceptions of mutually incompatible goals by undermining, directly or indirectly, each other's goal seeking capability.

A conflict cannot be detected without existence of some visible signs that show certain position difference or opposing interest between the actors over certain commodity. Sometimes conditions for conflict exist, different actors may have incompatible goals, but, they may not be pursuing these goals by any overt strategy. However, what is important is that at least one party has articulated its positional differences in the form of demands, and the other party is aware of such demands. Latent conflict thereby is defined as a stage in the development of conflict where one or more groups, parties or state has questioned the existing values, issues or objectives that are of national relevance. In addition, these must be noticeable by some identifiable and observable signs. The positional differences and the clashing interests in a latent conflict must be articulated as demands or claims. The manifest conflict is a stage when tensions are present but are expressed by means below the threshold of violence. Tense relations between the parties can reach a turning point from where the use of force may become more likely. Economic sanctions, for example, are a means by which a latent conflict can be turned into a manifest.

Violent Conflicts

Conflicts enter a violent phase when parties go beyond seeking their own goals peacefully, to trying to dominate damage or destroy the opposing parties' ability to pursue their interest. The existence of frustration of substantive or implemental needs is essential condition for one non-violent conflict to escalate into a violent one: "Violence as a response is produced when certain innate needs or demands

are deeply frustrated.” In political conflict analysis, the use of force, physical damages and human casualties are the characteristics of a violent conflict. Battle-related human casualties’ thresholds are commonly used to define violent conflict, particularly in respect of war.

Still, war cannot be completely explained by looking only at its material destruction and human casualties. The causes of wars and the commodities at stake should also be taken into account, e.g., territorial conflict, power or ethno-political conflict. War, especially the variables influencing the war dynamic and its consequences are very complex and changeable that makes creation of a common theoretical concept a difficult task. Sometime before and especially after the end of the Cold War the structure of extreme violent conflicts around the world changed considerably, and wars’ intensity dramatically increased. This also influenced the adaptation of theoretical concept of conflict researches. It is in this context that the proposition of structural transformation of war was put forward by several authors. In an attempt to give more specified definitions about the post-Cold War armed conflicts these authors employed the terms like “low-intensity conflicts”, “wars of the third kind” and “new wars”. War has been defined as a form of violent mass-conflict that is characterised by: the fighting of at least two opponents with organised, regular military forces where the fighting is not sporadic, but organised and systematic. The war lasts for a considerable period of time and the fighting is intense, that is, it leads to victims and destruction.

Check Your Progress Exercises 3

Note: i) Use of the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

1) Explain the different between violent and non-violent conflict.

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CONFLICT ISSUES

Clearly, there are number of things over which two parties in conflict can have incompatible goals. For examples, humans can fight about a bewildering variety of things, about money, about properties, about politics, about ideas. Yet, it is possible to reduce this perplexing variety by classifying these issues into three main sociological categories: wealth, power and prestige. Understanding political conflict cannot be accomplished without knowing what are the object, and the issue of the conflict. Moreover, achieving conflict resolution is not possible without understanding the issue and the cause of the conflict.

Territory and Border-Conflicts

Conquering of territories and secession of territories have continuously been subjects of political conflicts and central conflict issues of countless disputes,

confrontations and wars. The goals could include not only territorial expansion, but also incorporation of ethnic frontiers within the state's, as well as secession. Secession is here understood as the detachment of territory and the people living on that territory from the sovereignty of an existing state and the establishment of a newly independent state with sovereignty over that territory and its people. Territorial goals, however, are either implicitly or explicitly tied to resources or to ethnic minorities. The conflict in East Pakistan that led its secession from West Pakistan (now Pakistan) and creation of Bangladesh in 1971 is an example of such a conflict. While it was a territorial conflict, it was also tied to the aspiration of Bengali ethnic identity.

Today's territory related conflicts are dominantly conflicts over disputed state delineation, rather than about threats of annexation and conquest. Traditionally, borders have been seen as physical lines and border conflicts were, therefore, conflicts of subordination where rules were to be extended beyond the existing geographical borderline. Geographically represented border conflicts are a particularly "stable form of conflict because they provide a clear physical distinction between two easily identifiable sides." In such conflicts, borders have a 'double function' in that they provide a means of both territorial inclusion and exclusion, but in parallel also for 'functional' inclusion or exclusion.

Minority, Ethnic and Government-Power Conflicts

Minority conflicts are not necessarily related to ethnic conflicts. In the case of such a conflict minority could also be a social minority. Yet, ethnicity-related minority conflicts are the dominant one. That kind of conflict can have domestic dimensions (minority – government) as well as interstate dispute (one state – minority – another state). These conflicts arise because the majority or dominant national government wants to establish the same conditions in regions of that state. Minority's ability for political articulations and formulation of its specific cultural, educational, and self-governance demands is assumed.

Minority conflict is defined as a form of active antagonism between the government of a state and representatives of a minority over the extent of opportunities of minorities to influence the use and organisation of the sub-state territories they inhabit. For ethnic conflicts there are many different definitions, particularly about what drives these types of conflicts. Some theorists claim that ethnic conflicts appear, mostly in a form of separatist warfare, as a consequence of the minority's lack of trust in the state system governed by the majority to disadvantage of the rights of minorities. Other theorists argue that the very competition of the political class and the actions of ethnic entrepreneurs drive ethnic conflicts and that the political elites create ethnic conflicts manipulating with ethnic identities in their quest for power.

Conflicts over Resources

Here, the struggle about access to and control over important resources is the defining factor of the conflict. Perhaps it is intuitive that natural resources could become conflict issues, but less obvious is the role that resources may have in specific instances of a given conflict. Inequities in the distribution, use, needs, desires and consequences of resources management have been sources of tension and international and interstate disputes. There are four important conditions that influence the likelihood that resources will be the objects of military or

political action: 1) the degree of scarcity; 2) the extent to which the supply is shared by two or more groups/states; 3) the relative power of those groups; and 4) the ease of access to alternative sources. The most recent approach in the resource conflict literature is “resource scarcity” as a main conflict contributor. This approach links resources and considers resource scarcity ((supply induced, demand induced or absolute scarcity), as well as environmental degradation as a key conflict issues.

Key Points

- For categorisation of conflict, two approaches: Subjectivist approach focuses on perceived incompatibility; Objectivist approach focuses on social structure.
- Conflicts can be non-violent or violent.
- Causes of conflict can be varied. Territorial and border; Minority, ethnic, and government power conflict; over resources depending on resource scarcity; resource distribution; power of the each actor; access to alternative resources.

Check Your Progress Exercises 4

Note: i) Use of the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

1) How does conflict transformation leads to peace building?

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LET US SUM UP

The conflict is one of the central terms of politics, just as power, interests, war or peace. It is not the very existence of conflicts that is problematic or even peace endangering, but rather their forms, which are oriented to power or one-sided interests implementation. Conflicts can also be different. When carried out in a non violent and regulated way, it can contribute quite positively to the development of society. As conflicts are an omnipresent part of human interaction, it is not their elimination, but rather their regulation, non violent or peaceful settlement which is important. However, the possibility for peaceful settlement of conflict crucially depends on its actual development stage and escalation dynamic. So, in the face of an acute crisis or outbreak of war, peaceful conflict measures may prove to be relatively unsuccessful. However, given the complexity of the conflict cycle, there is a need for a holistic approach to conflict prevention, management and resolution, and a need to be open to alternative models.

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ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercises 1

- 1) Your answer should include social position on issues of conflict interpersonal groups and dimensions of conflict.

Check Your Progress Exercises 2

- 1) Your answer should include life cycle of conflict, crisis prevention, conflict settlement, conflict transformation and peace building.

Check Your Progress Exercises 3

- 1) Your answer should highlight the following.
 - a) Conflict categories with examples
 - b) Violent and non-violent conflict

Check Your Progress Exercises 4

- 1) Your answer should highlight conflict issues such as territory and border conflicts.



UNIT 2 SOURCES OF CONFLICT*

Structure

Introduction

Aims and Objectives

Sources of Conflict-I

Economic Conflict

Value Conflict

Power Conflict

Ineffective Communication

Escalation of Conflict

Sources of Conflict-II

Inter-personal Conflict

Role Conflict

Intergroup Conflict

Multiparty Conflict

International Conflict

Variants of Threat in International Conflict

Threat of Punishment

Threat of Conquest

Threat of Annihilation

Threat of Offensive/Defensive Weapons

Boundary Disputes

New Wars.

Conflict in South Asia (Sources of Conflict)

Let Us Sum Up

Some Useful References

Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

INTRODUCTION

Conflict occurs between people in all kinds of human relationships and in all social settings because of the wide range of potential differences among people. Absence of conflict usually signals the absence of meaningful interaction. Conflict by itself is neither good nor bad. However, the manner in which conflict is handled determines whether it is constructive or destructive.

You have already read in earlier Units that conflict is defined as an incompatibility of goals or values between two or more parties in a relationship, combined with attempts to control each other and antagonistic feelings toward each other. The incompatibility or difference may exist in reality or may only be perceived by the parties involved. Nonetheless, the opposing actions and the hostile emotions are very genuine hallmarks of human conflict.

Conflict has the potential for either a great deal of destruction or much creativity and positive social change. Therefore, it is essential to understand the basic

* Prof. Sudhir Jacob George, Former Head & Chairman, Deptt. of Political Science Central University of Hyderabad

processes of conflict so that one can work to maximize productive outcomes and minimize destructive ones. This unit will discuss some common types and sources of conflict, the levels of social interaction at which conflict occurs per-se.

Aims and Objectives

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- know different sources of conflict;
- understand the levels of social interaction at which conflict occurs;
- know the variations of threat in international conflicts; and
- understand the reasons behind and nature of conflicts in South Asia.

SOURCES OF CONFLICT-I

Conflicts may arise because of various causes and reasons. These can be divided into two major groups. One based on issues and resources and second on interpersonal, inter-group differences. Conflicts that arise because of issues and resource are economic, value or power interest conflicts. These may escalate because of ineffective communication and other reasons. Let us examine these sources of conflict.

Economic Conflict

Economic Conflict involves competing motives to attain scarce resources. Each party wants to get the most that it can. Hence the behaviour and emotions of each party are directed toward maximizing its gain. For example the source of conflict between trade union and management are incompatible goals about how to share the “economic pie”

Value Conflict

Value Conflict, involves the incompatibility in the ways of life, ideologies – the preferences, principles and practices that people believe in. Examples of value conflict are some of the international conflict during the Cold War, wherein each side asserts the rightness and superiority of its way of life and its socio-political economic system.

Power Conflict

Power conflict 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. Thus a power struggle ensues which usually ends in a victory and defeat or a “standoff” with a continuing state of tension. Power conflicts can occur between individuals, 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. It must be noted that most conflicts are not of a pure type, but involve a mixture of sources, for example, union-management conflict involves economic competition but may also take the form of a power struggle and often involves different ideologies or political values. This is valid for the struggle for power between nations/state. The more sources involved the more intense and intractable the conflict usually is.

Ineffective communication is another important source of conflict. Miscommunication and misunderstanding can create conflict even where there are no basic incompatibilities. In addition, parties may have different perceptions as to what are the facts in a particular situation, and until they share information and clarify their perceptions, resolutions are not possible. Self centeredness, selective perception, emotional bias, prejudices etc., are all forces that lead us to perceive situations very differently from the other party. Lack of skill in communicating what we really mean in a clear and respectful fashion often results in confusion, hurt and anger, all of which further feed the conflict process. Whether the conflict has objective sources or is due only to perceptual or communication problems, it is experienced as very real, by the parties involved.

Escalation of Conflict

Escalation of conflict is another major source of conflict. It is more additional than basic that is it comes in after the conflict has started. Conflicts have a definite tendency to escalate, i.e., to become more intense and hostile, and to develop more issues i.e., what the parties say the conflict is about. Therefore, escalating conflicts become more difficult to manage. The process of escalation feeds on fear and defensiveness. Threat leads to counter threat, usually with higher stakes at each go /round. Selective and distorted perception justifies a competitive and cautious approach as opposed to a trusting and competitive one. It is contended that competition breeds competition. *The Self – fulfilling prophecy* comes into play. Each party believes in the evil intentions of the other and the inevitability of disagreement; and therefore takes precautionary actions which signal mistrust and competitiveness. When the other party responds with a counteraction, it is perceived as justifying the initial precautionary measure, and a new spiral of action and counter action begins. Through the norm of reciprocity, stronger attempts to control are met not only with stronger resistance, but more contentious attempts to gain the upper hand.

With each succeeding spiral of conflict, polarisation grows and the parties become more adamant and intransigent in their approach to the situation. Even though the intensity of the conflict triggering event induces conflictual behaviour with negative consequences, and the conflict has moved one more step up the escalation staircase. When parties become “locked in” to a conflict they are usually unable to get out by themselves, and the intervention of a third party in the role of an arbitrator, mediator or consultant may be needed.

Check Your Progress Exercises 1

Note: i) Use of the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) Discuss the major sources of conflict in terms of material, ideological and motive aspects?

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SOURCES OF CONFLICT-II

As already mentioned the second sources of conflicts are human based. These may be individuals, groups, parties, states or nations.

Inter-personal Conflict

Inter-personal conflict occurs when two people have incompatible needs, goals or approaches in their relationship. Communication break-down is often an important source of inter-personal conflict. Hence learning communication skills is valuable in preventing and resolving such difficulties. At the same time, very real differences occur between people that cannot be resolved by any amount of improved communication. "Personality Conflict" refers to very strong differences in motives, values or styles in dealing with people. In such conflicts, both parties have a high need for power, both want to be dominant in a relationship, there is no way for both to be satisfied; therefore, a power struggle ensues. Common tactics used in inter-personal power struggle include the exaggerated use of rewards and punishments, deception and evasion, threats and emotional blackmail, and flattery or ingratiation. Unresolved power conflict usually recycles and escalates to the point of the break-down of relationship and its termination.

Role Conflict

Role conflict involves very real differences in role definitions expectations or responsibilities between individuals who are interdependent in a social system. If there are ambiguities in the role definitions in an organisation or unclear boundaries of responsibilities persist, then the stage is set for the inter-personal friction between persons involved. Unfortunately, the conflict is often misdiagnosed as inter-personal conflict rather than role conflict and resolution are then complicated and misdirected. The emotional intensity is often quite high in role conflict since, people are directly involved as individuals and there is a strong tendency to personalize the conflict. This is tenable for leadership of States/Nations also.

Intergroup Conflict

Inter-group conflict occurs between collections of people such as ethnic or racial groups, departments or levels of decision making in the same organisation, and union and management. Competition of/for scarce resources is a common source of intergroup conflict and societies have developed numerous regulatory mechanisms viz. collective bargaining and mediation, for dealing with such conflict in less disruptive ways. Social and Psychological processes are very important in intergroup conflict. Group members tend to develop stereotypes (oversimplified, negative, beliefs) and practice discrimination against them. These classic symptoms of intergroup conflict can be just as evident in organisations as in race relations, in community settings. Intergroup conflict is especially tense and prone to escalation. Intractability persists when group identities are threatened. The cost of destructive intergroup conflict can be extremely high for a society in both economic and social terms.

Multi party conflict occurs in societies when different interest groups and organisations have varying priorities over resource management and policy development. These complex conflicts typically involve a combination of economic, value and power sources. This complexity is often (intertwined and sometimes predominate) beyond the reach of traditional authoritative or adversarial procedures. More collaborative approaches to building consensus are needed for resolution of such conflicts.

International Conflict

International conflict occurs between states at the global level. Competition for resources certainly plays a part, but value and power conflicts are often intertwined and sometimes predominate. Differences between states are articulated through the channels of diplomacy in a consistent and constant game of give and take, or threat and counter threat, sometimes for the highest stakes. Mechanisms of propaganda can lead to many of the same social psychological distortions that characterise interpersonal and intergroup conflict.

One of the most striking differences between the conflict of firms and of states is that the competition of states is marked by a dramatic alternation of peace and war. This alternation of two contrasted forms of conflict – covert conflict of threats, promises and pressures during peace and overt conflict in war- is seen in all other relations as well. Nevertheless, the overt-covert pattern as a standard and almost regular cycle is found in its most developed form in international relations. Clausewitz's famous remark that "war is an extension of diplomacy" is recognition both of the unity of the system of diplomacy and war and of its two sharply contrasted patterns. What we have really is two systems – one, diplomacy, and the other, war – each of which moves to a point where it gives rise to the other, so that we have a constant, though not necessarily regular alternation between them. We use the term diplomacy here, rather than peace to describe the covert –conflict system of international relations, partly because peace is a much overworked and ambiguous word but also because one must distinguish clearly between that system of covert conflict between states which has a strong probability of ultimately passing the system boundary into war and that condition of genuine peace, or political integration, in which the agencies for the nonviolent resolution of conflict are adequate to maintain the system without either the threat or the actuality of war.

This brings us to the second peculiarity of international conflict. The importance of war as a social phenomenon is not merely that it represents a system boundary of worsening diplomatic relations a lashing out when the tension of diplomatic relations becomes intolerable for one party or the other; it also represents an ever present threat in diplomatic relations themselves. One could, indeed, classify the nature of diplomatic relations as peaceful or warlike by the extent to which the threat of war was used as an instrument in the conduct of diplomatic relations, e.g. United States-Canada relations almost non-existent threat of war. United States-Russia relations threat of war is never unlikely.

Key Points

- Conflict can arise due to differences over resources and issue.
- Resource and issue relate conflicts are economic conflict, value conflict, power conflict, due to ineffective communication or escalation of differences.
- Conflict can also arise due human nature and interpersonal, inter-group differences.
- Human based conflict include inter-personal conflict; role conflict, intergroup conflict, multiparty conflict, and International conflict
- International conflict occurs between states at global level, and carry the threat of war
- Diplomacy, used by states during peace time, is a covert form of conflict while war is overt conflict.
- War is an ever present threat that hangs over diplomatic relationship.

Check Your Progress Exercises 2

- Note:** i) Use of the space given below for your answer.
ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) What do you understand by inter-personal conflict?

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VARIANTS OF THREAT IN INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT

In international conflict, there are three kinds of threats: the threat of punishment, the threat of conquest and the threat of annihilation.

Threat of Punishment

Between two un-conditionally viable states/nations, the threat of punishment is the only significant threat, as neither can conquer nor annihilate the other. One nation can, however, make things uncomfortable for another by military action and so may be able to sway the policies of other nations in its favour. The problem with punishment, especially between relative equals, is that the traditional plaint of the angry parent, “it hurts me more than it hurts you” though rarely believed by the victim, has truth in it. The infliction of punishment is costly for the punisher as well as for the punished, quite apart from any retaliatory action, and the threat of punishment is correspondingly less effective as its costs increases. The Crimean War is a good example of a threat that turned into a war of punishment; the British and the French had no thought or hopes of conquering Russia. However by making matters unpleasant they hoped to dissuade Russia from extending its

power to Constantinople. In the course of this exercise, however, they also made matters very unpleasant for themselves-in fact for their armed forces.

Threat of Conquest

The threat of conquest becomes possible, when a nation is no longer unconditionally viable. In the expansion of empires, this threat has been used with powerful effect. The British Empire at its height was a masterly example of the use of the threat of conquest to organise a vast heterogeneous domain. In India a mosaic of Princely states in the matrix of British India (directly governed by the representative of the crown) testified to the effective use of a combination of actual and threatened conquest. Indirect rule in Africa was an example of the same basic pattern. The threat is not always one of conquest by the dominant power; at times it is of allowing the threatened country to be conquered by a rival dominant power. This seems to be so vis-a-vis the Western European Nations. These nations have little or no fear of conquest by the United States, because even though they may not be unconditionally viable with regard to the United States, they do enjoy secure conditional viability; the United States has no desire to absorb them into its political vortex/structure. Nevertheless, because these countries have a real fear of conquest /domination by Russia, even today, the threat of withdrawal of defense by the United States is a very effective one. It is interesting to note that this threat is not very effective against traditional neutrals, Sweden and Switzerland, whose reliance on a combination of historical habit and physical geography has so far been effective. In the case of East European States viz. Poland and Hungary, the fear of Russia is much more.

Threat of Annihilation

Threat of annihilation, the third threat is that of annihilation and it is not altogether new. One remembers Carthage and Jerusalem, but it has reached a new intensity with the development of nuclear weapons capable even of destroying all life on earth. Today the world may destroy itself in a few hours, perhaps as a result only of an accident or a misinterpretation of information received at some obscure station. A threat system of this kind, especially when the powers of annihilation are mutual, is intolerable and introduces a condition of desperate instability in international relations. We are all sitting under the sword of Damocles; it is not surprising that some desperate attempts are being made to fore-close this eventuality.

Threat of Offensive/Defensive Weapons

The distinction between offensive and defensive weapons is not always easy to draw, but it clearly represents an important difference. Thus a shield, a city wall, or a bomb shelter is purely defensive armaments; they lessen the capacity of the enemy to harm but can in no way harm them. A fighter plane has a somewhat intermediate status. Its main objective is to destroy agents of the enemy that are engaged in injurious activities, so that it has a defensive aspect; on the other hand, its defense is not passive like that of a bomb shelter, as it is aimed at injuring the aggressive agents of the enemy. A bomber or a missile is a clearly offensive weapon designed mainly to injure the enemy, even though this may have indirect effects in weakening the enemy power to injure. This distinction is important in distinguishing a possible pattern of action which simply diminishes

the power of the threatened to injure or it may be followed by offensive action, which increases the power of the threatened party to injure the threatened. This latter is the retaliatory response to threat. Between these two extremes, as before, we may notice an intermediate reaction-the offensive defense, which aims to injure the threatening agent of the threatened but not the threatener himself. Throughout history, there has been a race between offensive and defensive weapons technology improvement. The increased technical efficiency of offense generally seems to precede that of defense, perhaps because the payoffs to the innovator are greater in the case of offensive weapons. This is because offensive weapons always have a defensive aspect, through their power to destroy the offensive weapons of the enemy, whereas the defensive weapons seldom have an offensive aspect. It is not surprising, therefore, that the dynamics of weapon development has always favoured a constant increase both in the power and the range of offensive weapons, and that the improvement in defensive weapons where it has taken place, has been a catching up rather than a leading change.

Boundary Disputes

In international relations the boundaries of states tend to be very sharply defined and any violation of a boundary is regarded as a matter of gravest concern, and the efforts for survival or expansion of states are highly concentrated on the boundaries between them. During peace, that is mere existence of conflict by diplomacy, it is impossible to make any but the most minor and insignificant adjustments in international boundaries, because of the gradual change in the relative power of nations, however, the existing structure of boundaries gets even more and more obsolete and is subject to great strain. Eventually when this becomes beyond the pale of mere diplomacy, war breaks out. War creates, a fluidity in national boundaries that did not exist under diplomacy and the war ends when the parties think that the adjustments in boundaries that will emerge from it are not damaging enough to the weaker parties to make it worth their while continuing the war. In the treaty that follows the war, a new set of boundaries is drawn presumably more akin to the structure of the relative national power that the war has revealed vis-a-vis the two contending powers.

New Wars

In the post cold war era, a number of epoch making changes were unleashed. The end of bipolarity, rise of new waves of democratization, globalization of economic power and of information, rise of violent expressions of claims to rights based on cultural identity (e.g. Yugoslav wars, early 1990s), and a redefinition of sovereignty that imposed new responsibilities on states towards their citizens and the world community – there was a change in the nature of international conflict. What emerged were types of conflict, termed as ‘new wars’ by Mary Kaldor. While the traditional interstate conflict continued, their intensity decreased. Instead the intensity of a new form of organised violence, sub-national ethnic and religious conflict increased. These ‘new wars’ were not confined to armies fighting at the battlefield, but spilled over into the civilian areas- to the home front- involving as they did a number of non state actors, terrorist organization. Sometimes responses by the state also impacted civilians. Thus the attack on the two international trade towers by a terrorist organisation Al Qaeda in New York and the US led NATO alliance’s bombing of Afghanistan is part of this new wars, which have blurred battlefield and home front. Some of

these low intensity conflicts where two states may not be engaged in fighting directly may still be treated as threats to international peace and security, and invite international action- including threat or use of force being. This can be to prevent genocide, violation of human rights or for democratic governance. For example, international action in Bosnia, Rwanda, East Timor. At other times, as in the case of Afghanistan, the US led bombing was to 'punish' the perpetrators of 9/11 terror attack.

Key Points

Three kinds of threats:

- Threat of punishment between viable states when neither can conquer nor annihilate the other. 'Punishment' often ends up hurting both the parties
- Threat of conquest: When one country is far superior, and conquers and expands like the British empire
- Threat of annihilation: the threat to completely destroy, when mutual between parties leads to instability of the international system. Nuclear weapons can annihilate.
- Other kinds of threats include that of offensive and defensive weapons and border dispute.
- A new threat to international stability and peace are sub national ethnic and religious conflicts, referred to as 'new wars'. These involve non state actors, bring devastation to civilian, violate human rights, use terror tactics.

Check Your Progress Exercises 3

Note: i) Use of the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

1) Write a brief essay on variants of threat in international conflict.

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CONFLICT IN SOUTH ASIA

To understand better the sources of conflict, we may take a look at the conflicts in South Asia, with particular reference to India, Pakistan and the role of China in the sub-continent: For several millennia, the South Asian region existed more or less in splendid isolation. Separated from the rest of Asia by the Hindukush, the Karakorum and the Great Himalayan ranges in the North and the Indian Ocean in the South, the Indian sub-continent developed a distinctive civilization identity and structured relations between the various local political entities as the critical component of "high politics" for much of the region's history. To be sure, the sub-continent was periodically invaded by outside powers, usually land invasions from West and Central Asia. Only in the latter half of the modern

period did the sub-continent confront seaborne invasions mounted by the European colonial powers, one of which, Great Britain, triumphed and ruled over South Asian region for about two hundred years.

However, irrespective of the source of these land and seaborne invasions, the dominant patterns of strategic interaction remained similar. The local South Asian States interacted mostly with each other. The invaders either left the sub-continent after ransacking its wealth or they stayed on and became part of the local civilization, and proceeded to join the other regional entities in jostling with one another for power, as had been the case for centuries. This pattern of behaviour continued even after the end of the British Raj that left behind, two new and independent states, India and Pakistan. The conflictual interaction between these two countries has dominated the strategic environment on the Indian sub-continent since 1947. There was no doubt; external interactions too, mostly with the United States and Russia, and to an extent also China, with its courting Pakistan after the fallout with India in 1962. All these nevertheless fed into the primary security competition between India, Pakistan and China.

Clearly the dyadic competition between the first two states often receives most public attention; in part because of their low intensity conflict was highly visible. They have occasionally threatened to lead to high risk escalation and take place under the shadow of relatively weak nuclear capabilities. Despite these factors, it is significant to note that low-intensity conflicts have occurred in the Sino-Indian case as well. China has supported insurgencies in India's North-East for more than about four to five decades. India historically has upheld the cause of the Tibetans of Tibet, against China.

As regards India and Pakistan, regarding the issue of low intensity conflict persisting between them, two issues are primary. The first one relates to the choice Pakistan makes with regard to the present ferment in Kashmir. The rebellion of the Kashmiris has in a way reached the limits of its success. Whether Pakistan will up the ante by altering either by enhancing its quantity and quality of support given, will surely impact future Indo-Pak security competition in the near future. The second set of choices relates to the decisions made by the governments in power respectively. Both the Indian and Pakistani decisions are in a way interdependent and therefore, immediate Pakistani choices with respect to Kashmir will determine the prospects of Indian conventional retaliation and the concomitant escalation of conflict in the region.

Check Your Progress Exercises 4

Note: i) Use of the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

1) Describe the nature of conflicts in South Asian Region

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LET US SUMUP

In this Unit, you have read about the sources that cause conflicts in various types. First type of sources is material, ideological or motivational. These cause economic conflicts, value conflicts, power conflicts, conflicts caused due to ineffective communication and escalation of conflicts. Second category of conflicts can be classified on the basis of parties involved. These include inter-personal conflict, role conflict, inter-group conflict, multi-party conflict and international conflicts. There also are variants of threats, particularly in international area that cause conflicts. These threats may be of punishment, conquest, annihilation, possession of offensive and defensive weapons, boundary disputes etc. You also read the nature of conflicts in South Asia as an example of sources of conflicts. Here India and Pakistan, in particular, and China have been involved in conflicts due to differences over borders, competition for power, and interference in each other due to historical and ideological reasons. For a meaningful effort for management and resolution of conflicts, it is important that sources and causes for the same are well understood and appreciated.

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ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercises 1

- 1) Your answer should economic, ideological, power, struggle and ineffective communication.

Check Your Progress Exercises 2

- 1) Your answer should have the following points:
 - a) Inter personal conflict, intergroup conflict and
 - b) Multiparty conflict and international conflict.

Check Your Progress Exercises 3

- 1) Your answer should highlight the following:
 - a) Threat of punishment, threat of conquest and
 - b) Threat of annihilation, threat of weapons, boundary disputes and new wars.

Check Your Progress Exercises 4

- 1) Yours answer should include India-Pakistan relations, Indian Ocean, Himalayan ranges, Colonial Powers and at the end Wars in 1962, 1965 and 1971 conflicts in the region.

UNIT 3 TYPES AND LEVELS OF CONFLICT*

Structure

Introduction

Aims and Objectives

Defining Conflict: Conceptual Clarifications

Functions/Objectives of Conflict

Constructive Aspects

Types and Levels of Conflicts

Quincy Wright's Classification

Anatol Rapoport's Classification

Singer's Classification

Holsti's Classifications

Stuart Chare's Classification

Kenneth Boulding's Classification

John Galtung's Classification

Dennis Sandole's Classification

Let Us Sum Up

Some Useful References

Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

INTRODUCTION

We all are familiar with conflicts. They are part of our daily life. They are inherent in human relations. But this does not mean that every social relationship is entirely or even partly conflicting *all* the time. Nor does it mean that every underlying conflicting relationship will be expressed with the same degree and kind of hostility or violence. Conflicts belong to the full complexity of social existence; their domain is as vast and varied as life itself. To understand the full complexities of different types and levels of conflicts we have to draw perspectives from various disciplines such as **Anthropology, Sociology, History, Political Science, International Relations** and **Psychoanalysis**. This will give us an interdisciplinary view of conflicts. What do we understand by conflict? Are all conflicts bad or have negative impact? What purposes do they serve? How many types of conflicts can be identified? Are there any unidentified conflicts? This Unit tries to explore answers to some of these questions.

Aims and Objectives

After going through this Unit, you will be able you to understand:

- the conceptual problems of identifying the meaning and definition of conflict;
- functions and objectives of conflict; and
- various kinds, types, levels and manifestations of conflict.

DEFINING CONFLICT: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

The word conflict is derived from the Latin word *confligere* meaning to strike together. Originally, it had a physical rather than moral connotation, though the English word has both. In the physical sense, it denotes two or more different things moving to occupy the same space at the same time, the logical inconsistency and the process of solution being identical. For example, the logical inconsistency of two billiard balls being in the same place at the same time is resolved by the conflict which results in their rolling to two different positions.

There is no agreement among scholars on the precise meaning of the term conflict. There are many definitions of the term. Some of the definitions given below will help you to understand the concept of conflict:

- 1) George Simmel, whom we owe a classical analysis of various forms of conflict, insisted that “conflict is a certain amount of discord, inner divergence and outer controversy, is organically tied up with the very elements that ultimately hold the group together”.
- 2) Kenneth Boulding defines conflict as a form of competition in which the competing parties recognize that they have mutually incompatible goals. (Kriesberg: 1973, p.4)
- 3) Lewis Coser, who offered one of the most influential definitions of conflict, regards it as ‘a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate the rivals’ (Jayaram and Saberwal: 1996, p.5). Defined thus, conflict is a comprehensive category, encompassing a variety of phenomena, from brawls in the bazaar to wars between nations.
- 4) Park and Burgess write that ‘Conflict is always conscious. Indeed it evokes the deepest emotions and strongest passions and enlists the greatest concentration of attention and of effort. Both competition and conflict are forms of struggle. Competition, however, is continuous and impersonal. Conflict is intermittent and personal’. (Kriesberg: 1973, p.4)
- 5) According to Robert C. North ‘A conflict emerges whenever two or more persons (or groups) seek to possess the same object, occupy the same space or the same exclusive position, play incompatible goals, or undertake mutually incompatible means for achieving their purposes’ (North: 1968, p.226).
- 6) The conception identifying conflict with violent interactions in which behaviour and perceptions are in opposition has remained a basic conception in conflict studies. Mack and Snyder, without offering a specific definition, identify the distinguishing characteristics of the range of conflict phenomena as: (i) the existence of two or more parties; (ii) their interaction arises from a condition of resource scarcity or position scarcity; (iii) they engage in mutually opposing actions; (iv) their behaviour is intended to damage, injure or eliminate the other party; (v) their interactions are overt and can be measured or evaluated by outside observers (Bercovitch: 1984, p. 4).

- 7) Mahatma Gandhi's view of conflict and the importance of expressing it is one of his most significant insights, and he found it confirmed in the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*, a Hindu religious scripture. According to his interpretation, the *Gita* regards each person as possessing truth and untruth together. "The field of battle is in our own body", Gandhi said in summarizing its teachings.

One finds altogether a different understanding of the meaning of international conflicts/civil wars or wars in the literature on conflict. Disagreement over the exact notion of the conflict as a term in the domain of international relations dominates until today. Different understandings of international conflict can be discerned from browsing of the literature. Singer and Small define conflicts as violent disputes in which at least one of the combatant parties is a state, and there are at least 100 battle-deaths. This definition covers exclusively soldiers and other military staff. Civilian victims are however not considered. Thus, there are divergent definitions of the concept of conflict in different social sciences, including international politics and peace and conflict studies. Each one of the definitions included in this section adds a new insight and perspective to our understanding of the complex phenomenon called "conflict".

Check Your Progress Exercises 1

Note: i) Use of the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) What do you understand by conflict? Describe Mahatma Gandhi's views on conflict.

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FUNCTIONS/OBJECTIVES OF CONFLICT

Scholars of conflict studies do not believe (like an average person) that *all* conflicts are bad, as they serve positive social functions. Conflict prevents the ossification of the social system by exercising pressure for innovation and creativity. George Sorel felt that a social system was in need of conflict if only to renew its energies and revitalize its creative forces. Coser states that: 'Conflict within and between groups in a society can prevent accommodations and habitual relations from progressively impoverishing creativity. The clash of values and interests, the tension between what is and what some groups feel ought to be, the conflict between vested interests and new strata and groups demanding their share of power, wealth, and status, have been productive of vitality; note for example the contrast between the "frozen world" of the Middle Ages and the burst of creativity that accompanied the thaw that set in with Renaissance civilization' (Coser: 1967, p.20). According to John Dewey, 'Conflict is the gadfly of thought. It stirs us to observation and memory. It instigates to invention. It shocks us out of sheep-like passivity, and sets us at noting and contriving Conflict is a *sine qua non* of

reflection and ingenuity'. Conflict not only generates new norms and new institutions, it may also be stimulating directly in the economic and technological realm. Economic historians often have pointed out that much technological improvement has resulted from the conflict activity of trade unions through the raising of wage levels. It may be noted that the extreme mechanization of coal-mining in the United States has been partly explained by the existence of militant unionism in the American coalfields (Coser, 1967, p.20). Coser writes that a natural scientist (Waldemar Kaemfert), describing the function of earthquakes, stated in 1952 admirably what could be considered the function of conflict. The scientist wrote: 'There is nothing abnormal about an earthquake. An unshakable earth would be a dead earth. A quake is the earth's way of maintaining its equilibrium, a form of adjustment that enables the crust to yield to stresses that tend to reorganise and redistribute the material of which it is composed... The larger the shift, the more violent the quake, and the more frequent the shifts, the more frequent are the shocks' (Coser: 1967, p. 26).

Constructive Aspects

According to Marx, conflict leads not only to ever-changing relations within the existing social structure, but also the total social system undergoes transformation through conflict. A central thesis of Arnold Toynbee's monumental book, *A Study of History*, reveals that a group or a system that no longer is challenged is no longer capable of creative response. It may subsist, wedded to the eternal yesterday of precedent and tradition, but it is no longer capable of renewal.

Most contemporary social scientists lay stress on the constructive consequences of conflict relations. Dubin's five central propositions constitute a broader thesis: intergroup conflict is a fundamental institutionalised social process which determines the direction of social change and, in effect, defines social welfare. Mack and Snyder consider that though most of his analysis is drawn from experience of industrial relations, the propositions have wider applicability. They also summarise the views of five other scholars: (i) conflict sets group boundaries by strengthening group cohesiveness and separateness; (ii) conflict reduces tension and permits maintenance of social interaction under stress; (iii) conflict clarifies objectives; (iv) conflict results in the establishment of group norms; and (v) without conflict, accommodative relations would result in subordination rather than agreement (Mack and Snyder: 2006, p. 22).

To Mahatma Gandhi, conflict has its benefits. An appreciation of the other point of view enhances one's own perspective. We are all limited to our own angle of vision, Gandhi said. Through conflict, one gains a broader view of truth.

Key Points

- The word conflict comes from Latin word *confligere* meaning to strike together.
- Different definition of conflict given by scholars. For e.g, Simmel defines conflict as discord inherent in a group; Lewis Coser regards it as struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources; Gandhi defines it as conflict between truth and untruth within each person.
- Scholars also do not see all conflict as negative for conflict also helps society renew itself, something that prevents ossification of society and brings innovations.

- Conflict can be constructive. e.g Marx considers it the motor of change progress of human history; Toyenbee considers conflict as the creative response in society, Gandhi considers it as enabling different viewpoints and broadening truth.

Check Your Progress Exercises 2

Note: i) Use of the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

1) Describe the objectives and purpose of conflict.

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TYPES AND LEVELS OF CONFLICTS

There is no agreement among scholars on types and levels of conflict. Different scholars have identified different kinds or types of conflict. There can be social conflicts, inter-community conflicts, caste conflicts, group conflict, interpersonal conflict, intellectual conflict, economic conflicts, cultural conflicts, religious conflicts, racial or ethnic conflicts, ideological conflicts, hot and cold conflict, north and south conflict, regional conflicts, international or intra-national conflicts and so on. According to Dennis Sandole, a typology facilitates analysis and a typology of conflicts could facilitate resolving as well as analysing conflicts. Moreover, a study of different typologies of conflicts may provide interrelated insights into a given conflict situation. Such insights could enable an analyst and potential third-party intervener to see a conflict from various angles, thereby enhancing the likelihood of a more effective response. This section provides an overview of typologies of conflicts that we find in the literature of conflict studies.

Quincy Wright's Classification

Quincy Wright was one of the earliest political scientists to make a systematic study of conflicts and war. According to him, conflict can take place among different sorts of entities. He identifies four types of conflicts – physical conflict, political conflict, ideological conflicts and legal conflicts. He distinguishes *physical conflict* in which two or more entities try to occupy the same space at the same time from *political conflict* in which a group tries to impose its policy on others. He further distinguishes these two types of conflict from *ideological conflicts* in which systems of thought or of values struggle with each other, and from *legal conflicts* in which controversies over claims or demands are adjusted by mutually recognized procedures (Wright: 1990, pp. 22-23). He also identifies fifth category of conflict – war. For him, war in the legal sense has been characterized by the union of all four types of conflict, as noted above. War is manifested by the physical struggle of armies to occupy the same space, each seeking to annihilate, disarm, or capture the other; by the political struggle of nations to achieve policies against the resistance of others; by the ideological

struggle of people to preserve or extend ways of life and value systems; and by the legal struggle of states to acquire titles, to vindicate claims, to prevent violence, or to punish offenses by recognized procedures of regulated violence.

Anatol Rapoport's Classification

Anatol Rapoport has proposed a threefold classification of conflicts: fights, games, and debates. Their distinguishing criteria are: how the opponent is viewed, the intent of the parties, and the rational content of the situation. In a fight, the opponent is viewed as a nuisance, the intent is to harm him, and the situation is devoid of rationality. In a game, the opponent is viewed like oneself, the intent is to outwit him, and the situation is completely rational. And in a debate, the opponent is viewed as essential but of a different sort, the intent is to convince him, and the situation is presumably rational.

Rapoport's three models of conflict dynamics can be elaborated further. He distinguishes the three kinds of conflicts on the basis of following four criteria. **First**, the basis or starting point of the struggle in all three models of conflict differs from each other. In the *fights*, there is a mutual fear or hostility between the parties; in the *games*, there is agreement between the parties to strive for mutually incompatible goals within constraint of certain rules, but not where outcome can be predicted in advance; and in the *debates*, there is disagreement between the parties about "what is" (facts) or "what ought to be" (values); i.e., clashes of convictions or "outlooks". **Second**, the image of the opponent (held by each party) is also different: in *fights*, the image held by each party is mainly a nuisance; preferably, the opponent should disappear, or at least be reduced in size or importance. In *games*, the image of the opponent held by each party is that of an essential partner, seen as a mirror image of the self; preferably, a strong opponent who will do his best to win; a rational being whose inner thought processes must be taken into account. In *debates*, the image of the opponent (held by each party) is mistaken or misguided; preferably, the opponent should become a convert to one's own outlook. **Third**, the objective of each party is also different in three types of conflicts. In fights, the objective of each party is to harm, destroy, subdue, or drive away the opponent, in games, it is to outwit the opponent and in the debates it is to convince the opponent. **Fourth**, the mode of interaction in all three types also differs. In *fights*, the mode of interaction is non-rational series of actions and reactions to the other's and one's own actions; use of thrusts, threats, violence, etc.; and the course of interaction does not depend on goals of the opponent. In *games*, the parties cooperate by following the rules and by doing their best to provide maximum challenge to the opponent; actions (stratagems) chosen on the basis of probable outcomes; and interaction terminates when outcome is obvious to both sides. In *debates*, the parties engage in verbal interaction of arguments using various techniques of persuasion such as brain washing, explaining away the opponent's beliefs, and removing threats associated in the opponent's mind with adopting one's own outlook.

Singer's Classification

Singer's conflict typology is based on the political status of conflict parties. He retains his original distinction between (a) interstate wars and (b) extra-systemic (mainly colonial) wars, but here adds two further classes of non-interstate conflict: (c) 'civil' conflicts, in which, unlike (b), one protagonist may be 'an insurgent or

revolutionary group within the recognized territorial boundaries of the state', and (d) the 'increasingly complex intrastate wars' in former colonial states, where the challenge may come from 'culturally defined groups whose members identify with one another and with the group on the basis of shared racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, or kinship characteristics' (Cited in Ramsbotham, *et al*: 2005, p. 65).

Holsti's Classification

K. J. Holsti, in his 1996 book, *The State, War, and the State of War*, has also adapted this typology. He earlier categorized international (interstate) conflict up to 1989 in terms of twenty-four issues, grouped into five composite sets: conflict over territory, economics, nation-state creation, ideology, and 'human sympathy' (i.e. ethnicity/religion). He concluded that the incidence of the first two had been declining, but that of the last three was increasing. He later focuses on non-interstate war and bases his typology on 'types of actors and / or objectives', ending up with four categories of conflict: (a) 'standard state versus wars (e.g. China and India in 1962) and armed interventions involving significant loss of life (the United States in Vietnam, the Soviet Union in Afghanistan)'; (b) 'decolonizing wars of "national liberation"'; (c) 'internal wars based on ideological goals' (e.g. the Sendero Luminoso in Peru, the Montenegro in Uruguay); and (d) 'state-nation wars including armed resistance by ethnic, language and / or religious groups, often with the purpose of secession or separation from the state' (e.g., the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the Ibos in Nigeria).

Stuart Chare's Classification

In 1951, Stuart Chase (See Fink, p. 418) presented a classification of following 18 levels of conflict:

- 1) Personal Quarrels – husband vs. wife, employer vs. servant, etc.;
- 2) Family vs. family;
- 3) Feuds – clan vs. clan;
- 4) Community quarrels – town vs. town, state vs. state;
- 5) Sectional quarrels – South vs. North, Southern Ireland vs. Ulster, etc.;
- 6) Workers against managers – foremen's unions vs. the rest of management, jurisdictional disputes between trade unions, etc.;
- 7) Political parties – two or more competing in elections;
- 8) Conflicts between the races – white vs. black, white vs. yellow, white vs. red, etc.;
- 9) Religious conflict – Protestant vs. Catholics, Hindus vs. Muslims, Jews vs. Muslims;
- 10) Anti-semitism – worldwide compound of racial, religious, and cultural antagonisms;
- 11) Ideological quarrels – communism vs. capitalism, business vs. government, labour vs. capital, communism vs. socialism, etc.;
- 12) Occupational conflicts – farmer vs. industrial worker, blue-collar vs. white-collar, etc.;
- 13) Competition within a given industry – denunciation of price-cutters and chisellers;

- 14) Competition between industries – trucks vs. freight cars, oil vs. coal, silk vs. rayon, etc.;
- 15) National rivalries – nation vs. nation;
- 16) Conflicts between cultures – in group vs. out group;
- 17) Cold War – Russia and her satellites vs. the democracies;
- 18) East vs. West.

Thus, Chase provides a better typology and levels of *conflict* than his predecessors. His list of 18 levels represents a fairly large number of domains for special theories of conflict. But, since Chase does not consider this an exhaustive list, the number implied is even greater, and remains indeterminate.

Kenneth Boulding's Classification

Kenneth Boulding (1962) identifies eight kinds of social conflicts: 1) Conflicts between or among persons; 2) Boundary conflicts between groups (spatially segregated groups); 3) Ecological conflict between groups; 4) Homogenous organisation conflict (i.e., between organisations of like character and purpose, such as state vs. state, sect vs. sect, union vs. union, etc.); 5) Heterogeneous organisation conflict (i.e., between unlike organisations, such as state vs. church, union vs. corporation, university vs. church/state, etc.); 6) Conflicts between a person and a group (mainly socialisation conflicts, as in child vs. family, person vs. peer group, person vs. hierarchical superiors or inferiors, etc.); 7) Conflict between a person and an organisation (mainly role conflicts); 8) Conflicts between a group and an organisation.

Johan Galtung's Classification

Johan Galtung provides a simple classification containing four types of conflict, as illustrated in the following table:

	<i>Intrasystem conflict</i>	<i>Intersystem conflict</i>
<i>Individual level</i>	Intrapersonal	Interpersonal
<i>Collective level</i>	e.g., intranational	International

To understand Galtung's classification, we should also keep in mind the meaning that he attaches to the terms "intrasystem" and "intersystem". He writes: "By an intra-system conflict ... we mean a conflict that can be found in the smallest subunits of the system, down to the individual actor, whereas an inter-system conflict splits the system in parts, each subsystem standing for its own goal state" (Cited in Fink, p. 422).

Dennis Sandole's Classification

Dennis Sandole presented a *three pillar framework* of conflict analysis, which locates any particular conflict including its distinguishing characteristics under

pillar 1, the causes and conditions of the conflict under *pillar 2*, and conflict intervention and implementation under *pillar 3*. According to him conflict is a process characterised by stages of initiation, escalation, controlled maintenance, de-escalation and some kind of termination (e.g., settlement, resolution). He not only defines but also distinguishes between three kinds of conflicts: *latent conflicts* (pre-MCPs) *manifest conflict processes* (MCPs), and *aggressive manifest conflict processes* (AMCPs). According to him, latent conflicts are conflicts that are developing, but have not yet expressed themselves in an observable manner, even for the parties themselves. MCPs are conflicts that have developed to the extent that they are observable, but have not been expressed so far in a violent manner. AMCPs are conflicts that have escalated from MCPs to a level of expression: they are not merely capable of being noticed and experienced, but are also destructive to parties, resources, and others as well.

Latent conflicts also are known sometimes as **non-violent conflicts**. According to some studies, there are two types of non-violent conflicts: *latent conflicts* and *manifested conflicts*. A latent conflict is defined as a stage in the development of a conflict where parties question existing values, issues or objectives that have a national relevance. Latent conflicts must carry some identifiable or observable signs in order to be recognized and noticed as such. In a latent conflict the positional differences and the clashing interests must be articulated as demands or claims. The manifest conflict is a stage when tensions are present but are expressed by means below the threshold of violence. Tense relations between the conflicting parties can reach a turning point enabling them to use force. Economic sanctions are a means by which a latent conflict can be turned into a manifest. Manifest conflicts, like latent conflicts, at all stages carried out by non-violent means and without use of armed force.

On the other hand, **violent conflicts**, like war, civil war, armed conflict, etc. are more destructive in which each party pursues the goal of injuring, destroying or otherwise forcibly eliminating the other. Thousands of deaths occur in violent conflicts. They leave permanent scars on the parties to the conflict. Wars or violent conflicts are high intensity conflicts, which leads to widespread destruction. In the 1950s and 1960s, it was argued that the international conflict was of such nature that it might eventually lead to an all-destructive war, as the two super powers were pursuing goals of nuclear superiority. The scholars have coined the term “MAD” (Mutually Assured Destruction) to describe the nature of such an eventuality.

Thus it is now clear that conflict typology is as diverse as there are issues and incompatibilities among various individuals, groups, nations, states, nationalities, and organisations.

Check Your Progress Exercises 3

Note: i) Use of the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

1) Can all conflicts be described as bad or having negative impact?

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- 2) Describe the types of conflicts classified by Quincy Wright.

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- 3) What type of conflicts are identified by Stuart Chare and Anatol Rapport?

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LET US SUM UP

Conflicts are universal. They are present in every family, community, society, state or organisation. They are inherent part of our social existence. There is no agreement among scholars on the precise definition of the term conflict. There is an 'academic conflict' among scholars on the question of defining the term 'conflict'. Nearly a dozen definitions available in different social science disciplines have been discussed in the Unit. Each one has its own merit. All of them collectively add different perspectives and insights to our understanding of the nature, types, levels and manifestations of conflicts. If we understand each conflict properly, a proper and agreeable solution of it can be worked out. Conflicts serve many purposes. All conflicts are not bad and destructive. Philosophers like Hegel and Marx have defended conflict as a necessary instrument of change and progress. Similarly, Simmel and Coser have defended it as a necessary tool of social integration. According to Coser, conflict prevents the social system from becoming rigid / inflexible by exercising pressure for innovation and creativity.

Current conflict typology is in a state of confusion. There are as many typologies as analysts, and the criteria employed not only vary, but are often mutually incompatible. A compilation of some of the different labels used in well-known analyses from the 1990s soon runs to well over a hundred. Some differentiate in terms of conflict parties, others in terms of conflict issues, but most in terms of hybrid lists that seem to muddle diverse categories. Some have two types, others run to more than twenty. This unit provides an overview of diverse types and levels of conflict.

SOME USEFUL REFERENCES

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ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercises 1

- 1) Your answer should include defining conflict, Mahatma Gandhi's views on conflict and understanding of international conflict.

Check Your Progress Exercises 2

- 1) Your answer should have the following points:
 - a) Views of scholar on conflict
 - b) Constructive views on conflict and Gandhi's views on conflict.

Check Your Progress Exercises 3

- 1) Your answer should have the following points:
 - a) Positive negative aspects of conflict
 - b) Views on conflict by leading scholars
 - c) Non-violent conflicts and diverse issues



UNIT 4 THEORIES OF CONFLICTS*

Structure

Introduction
Aims and Objectives
Theories of Conflict
Human Nature and Conflict
Biological and Socio-Biological Theories
Instinct Theory
Darwinism and Social Darwinism
Ethology
Socio-biology
Criticisms of Biological and Socio-Biological Theories
Psychological and Social Psychological Theories
Freudian Interpretation and Psychoanalysis
Social Identity Theory
The Seville Statement on Violence
Society and Conflict
Social Process Theories
Social Structural Theories
Structural Violence Theory
Human Needs Theory
Resource Theory
Relative Deprivation Theory
Socio-Economic Theories
Formal Theories
Let Us Sum Up
Some Useful References
Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

INTRODUCTION

In the earlier Units, you have read that there are different explanations about the causes of conflict in the field of peace and conflict studies. These are further explained by different theories. One set of theories locate the underlying causes and sources of conflict in human beings or in human nature. These can be conceptualised as Biological and Psychological Theories. Other theories place the sources of conflict in the way human beings interact with each other in the society or in socio-structural/institutional conditions. These can be referred to as Social Process Theories and Social Structural Theories. As such the two major sets of theories either focus on the human agency or on the patterns of social interaction and socio-structural conditions. A third set of theories of conflict are known as formal theories. These theories use mathematical language to express their core ideas. This Unit focuses on these theories.

* Prof. Kaushikee, Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (NMCPCR), Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

Aims and Objectives

After going through this unit you will:

- become familiar with the various theories about the causes and sources of conflict; and
- know about the debates within the theories of conflict.

THEORIES OF CONFLICT

You have read above that the range of theories that explain the causes and sources of conflict can be categorised into two: firstly, Human Nature and Conflict and secondly, Society and Conflict. Theories under these two categories point towards the ‘nature versus nurture’ debate. The ‘nature’ theorists emphasise that human beings are primarily affected by genes, so conflict is basically in their nature. The ‘nurture’ theorists insist that conflict emerges from the way society is organised. The various types of divisions within society lead to conflict.

Those who stress on human nature as a source of conflict are of the view that violence is inevitable, widespread and universal—irrespective of the social structures—as it is ‘inherent’ in human beings or within the individual. Hence these theories are also referred to as *Inherency Theories*. The social structural theories argue that conflict is not located inside the human being but outside it. Conflict is thus dependent on factors external to the human being. Such theories are also known as *Contingency Theories*.

There is a third set of theories called as *Interactionist Theories*, which combine the features of inherency and contingency theories. This approach rejects the ‘nature versus nurture’ debate as it believes that human behaviour is not caused by and should not be reduced to just one factor, either nature or nurture. Human behaviour, in fact, is a combination of both genetics and social structural conditions. John Burton’s Human Needs Theory has features of both inherency and contingency. Burton says that human beings are driven by their needs and they will pursue them at all costs. So, needs are, thus, inherent in human beings. However, these needs have to be satisfied in the social context and not outside it. The latter aspect is determined by contingency. This unit will, largely focus on the various aspects of the inherency and contingency theories.

HUMAN NATURE AND CONFLICT

Theories based on human agency focus on human behaviour, both at the individual as well as at the collective level, as the source of conflict.

Biological and Socio-Biological Theories

Biological theoretical approaches trace the sources of conflict and violence in the human genes. They emphasize on the biological factors or inborn traits of human beings. Biologically determined factors are seen to be responsible for inter-personal and inter-group violence. The biological theories mostly focus on aggression. It considers aggression as being genetically programmed in the human nervous system. Various biological perspectives about human aggression are reflected in the Instinct Theory, Darwinism and Social Darwinism, Ethology and Socio-biology. However, these perspectives have been subjected to severe criticisms.

It argues that aggressive behaviour is rooted in human instinct. Instinctive impulse is the source of human aggression and destructive behaviour. This is evident in the basic and primitive urge to fight and dominate.

Darwinism and Social Darwinism

Charles Darwin in his *Origin of Species* gave the concepts of 'survival of the fittest' – only the fittest people who successfully adapt to the specific environment in which they live will survive. This is biological evolution but it is a slow and gradual process. Hierarchical and graded relations between different classes have been justified by using the principle of 'survival of the fittest'.

Social Darwinism explains conflict in terms of 'natural selection' – the survival of the fittest and the inherent aggression in human beings. It stresses that competition and conflict play very significant roles in human society. Social Darwinists used the concept of 'stages of evolution' to legitimize the imperialist policies of conquests and wars.

Darwin's ideas have been criticised on the premise that he was unaware about the role played by mutations or biological process of changes occurring in the genetic material.

Ethology

Ethology is the science of animal behaviour in their natural habitat. It studies the behaviour patterns of different species. Ethology and evolutionary history have drawn conclusions about the instinctive impulse by comparing and deducing similarities between humans and natural animal behaviour. Ethologists have contended that the behaviour pattern of different species show a strong inherited base. All organisms, humans included, are a product of a process of 'evolution' in which 'fitness' for survival is determined by a combination of mutational factors and natural selection. Konrad Lorenz in his book *On Aggression* argues that aggression in human beings is a result of an "instinct for aggression". This aggression in humans is shared by most other species and has developed in an evolutionary manner because it has helped them survive over a period of time. Freud too said that human beings may have inherited aggressive impulses from many past generations through the process of natural selection.

Socio-biology

Socio-biology is a science that focuses on the study of social organisation of animals. Socio-biologists believe that animals including humans may have genetically inherited aggressive tendencies of social behaviours. Though, socio-biologists see animal aggression as being based largely in genes, they stress that it varies from one species to the other and also between different patterns of social organisations. Aggression is of different kinds – predatory aggression, fear-induced aggression, and irritable aggression etc. – each having its different basis biologically. In humans, aggression is less produced compared to other animals. Also, aggression in humans is more influenced by cultural learning. Within a group of species, there is likely to be more aggression if the population is concentrated compared to where populations are more spread out. For example,

spread out populations like the Eskimos of North America and the Aborigines of Australia were less involved in violence and warfare before they came in contact with the Western culture.

Criticisms of Biological and Socio-Biological Theories

The biological roots of human aggression have been subjected to severe criticism. Anthropologists and sociologists opine that human behaviour or human instinct cannot be traced to biological roots. It is more a product of human culture, which is created by human groups and passed on through social learning.

Though Freud opined that aggression is ingrained within individuals, he too was of the view that it developed in the individual through experience with others such as family members, mainly parents. Hence, psychoanalytic theory emphasizes that individual experiences during the period of early socialisation determines human personality.

Social Learning Theories also stress that aggression has nothing to do with genes but is a product of social learning. Learning is, however, dependent on conditioning. The stimuli available in a given situation is most likely to condition our response, for example, if there is a gun nearby, one is likely to use it if there is threat to one's life or property. Moreover, if aggressive behaviour is rewarded, one is likely to repeat it. On the contrary if it is punished, it is not likely to be repeated. Observational learning theory says that we learn from others, by way of observation of actions. We also learn through language.

John Burton says that if inherent human aggressiveness is the source of all conflicts, then we will just have to live with it. At the most, it can be controlled. In this case, conflict resolution that is, understanding the roots of the conflict and trying to resolve them is irrelevant, as the source cannot be changed or reformed at all.

Gandhi did not see violence as a part of human nature. He believed in the essential goodness of human beings and viewed human nature positively. According to him, "Man's nature is not essentially evil." Also, humans are capable of rising above selfishness and violence. Gandhi also opined that conflict was not inbuilt into people but into social structures. For Gandhi, human beings are not innately aggressive. When asked whether aggression is a basic human instinct, Gandhi observed: "Fortunately for humanity, nonviolence pervades human life and is observed by men without special effort." Moreover, he was of the belief that human beings "would have been self-destroyed ages ago" if they were not nonviolent by nature.

Key points

- Theories of conflict can be categorised into human nature or inherency theories; social structure or contingency theories; a combination of nature and nurture theories that see human behavior impacted by genetics and social structural conditions
- Human nature theories consider conflict and violence as inherent to human beings, affected by genes. Conflicts are inevitable, and occur irrespective of social structures.

- Examples of human nature theories Instinct Theory, Darwinism and Social Darwinism, Ethology, and Socio-biology. These perspectives have been subjected to severe criticisms.
- Gandhi did not see violence as a part of human nature. For him nonviolence pervaded human life.

Check Your Progress Exercises 1

Note: i) Use of the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) Distinguish between the inherency, contingency and interactionist theories of conflict.

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- 2) Discuss the 'nature versus nature' debate.

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- 3) Analyse the biological and socio-biological theories of conflict.

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- 4) Illustrate the psychological and socio-psychological theories of conflict.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES

Psychological theories locate conflict in the “minds of men”, in their beliefs, ideology, motivation, perceptions, values, etc. Some psychological traditions also focus on experiences of frustration that could lead to aggression. According to psychoanalysts, unfulfilled psychological needs could incite human to violence via the instinctive impulse. However, others locate violence in intra-personal tensions and other such psychic variables.

In motivational theories, the origin of aggression is in blocked energy of frustration, which is produced in varied social and psychological settings. Since aggression here is a reaction to an external stimulus, hence the social environment is also partly responsible for the activation of an internal physiological mechanism.

The socio-psychological perspective also focuses on processes of group formation and differentiation. Groups try to differentiate themselves from the ‘others’ and in this process (mis)perceptions, stereotyping, and dehumanization play a role, which in turn could lead to violent conflict.

Freudian Interpretation and Psychoanalysis

Psychiatrist Sigmund Freud traced the roots of conflict in intractable human nature. He stated that aggression “is carried out in the name of self-preservation, and is inherent to humans.” Albert Einstein, in a letter written to Freud before the Second World War, wanted to know the reasons for the easy arousal of hatred. Freud answered that the roots of violence are in the death instinct. He wrote: “War is due to a destructive instinct – instinct aimed at returning things to the inanimate state and which can work both inside and outside the body.”

According to Freud, human beings have two kinds of instincts – the life instinct and the death instinct. The life instinct desires pleasure. Compared to the life instinct is the death instinct, which is referred to as ‘Thanet’s’ by Freud. This death instinct leads to destructive behaviour – both towards the self as well as towards others and the world in general. The human urge for self-destruction is directed outwards, to destroy others, so as to preserve the self. For Freud, however, aggression is not the end; it is only a means to release tension. Aggressive behaviour helps reduce the tension.

According to the Psychoanalytical Theory, human beings start differentiating between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ from a very early age. This differentiation manifests itself in a deep psychological need for enemies.

Social Identity Theory

Henri Tajfel formulated the Social Identity Theory in which he aimed to answer the question – why people favour their own group over others. According to Tajfel, groups occupy different levels on the hierarchy of power and status. The process of distinguishing between ‘us and them’ changes the way people look at each other. Tajfel believed that the motivating principle behind this behaviour was a desire in people to have a positive and secure self-concept – a positive social identity. It can thus be deduced that people mainly think of their group as

a good one. But groups become a psychological reality only when defined in comparison to other groups. Hence, group members strive for a positive social identity and make efforts to achieve it by distinguishing positively between their own group and other groups.

Tajfel also addressed the question of what happens with those groups who have a low status compared to others. Such a group could choose one of these options: leave the group, either physically or psychologically; focus only on features that make one's group look good; compare one's group with other groups which are placed even lower on the status hierarchy; devalue the aspects that reflect poorly on one's group; and try to change the existing status hierarchy by engaging in social change. However, which one of these options will be chosen, will depend on a range of circumstances. Social identity theory, therefore, was basically a theory of social change.

The Seville Statement on Violence

The Seville Statement on Violence was written in 1986 for the United Nations sponsored International Year of Peace. A team of international specialists who were involved with the Seville Statement came up with the following five conclusions:

- 1) It is scientifically incorrect to say that we have inherited a tendency to make war from our animal ancestors.
- 2) It is scientifically incorrect to say that war or any other violent behaviour is genetically programmed into our human nature.
- 3) It is scientifically incorrect to say that in the course of human evolution there has been a selection for aggressive behaviour more than for other kinds of behaviour.
- 4) It is scientifically incorrect to say that humans have a "violent brain".
- 5) It is scientifically incorrect to say that war is caused by "instinct" or any single motivation.

The Seville Statement was endorsed by a wide range of scientific and professional organisations around the world and was based on the latest scientific evidence. It was adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1989.

SOCIETY AND CONFLICT

The theoretical approaches about society and conflict locate the source of conflict not within the individual but outside it – in social interactions and social processes and in the way society is organised. Aggression thus is not inbuilt but its expression is dependent on factors outside the individual.

Social Process Theories

Social process theories see conflict and conflict resolution as processes. One of the first ones to write about social processes was Adam Smith. Smith was an economist as well as a philosopher. He gave importance to the fabric of social relationships. According to him, these fabrics of relationships could lead to the emergence of principles, which could be applied to conflict resolution. He felt

that if markets were allowed to function naturally, they could be a great resolver of conflicts between humans.

Several theorists in the 20th century have paid attention to social process theories. Park and Burgess related conflict to competition. Conflict had a positive function for Simmel and Coser, as they were interwoven into social institutions and contributed positively to “negotiated order”. He suggested that human institutions grow through a process of negotiation. Negotiation thus was a fundamental process through which society was formed and constantly reconstituted.

Field Theory sees conflict and its resolution as products of a field of forces. This is reflected in the works of Field theorists like Kurt Lewin and Morton Deutsch. Lewin believed that behaviour was a product of a field of forces and how they came together. This determined the behaviour of those individuals who were involved. Deutsch analysed the concepts of competition and cooperation and sought to find out the conditions under which cooperation could emerge out of competition. Communication according to him was very critical for cooperation.

Systems Theory views conflict as a system of relationships. It seeks to find out how parts of a social system, that is social institutions, work together. Parts of social systems may ‘function’ but they may also ‘dysfunction’. When they dysfunction, they are not in complete harmony. This is where the concept of conflict and conflict resolution comes into the picture.

Social Exchange Theories have tried to apply the principles of economic exchange in markets to non-economic exchange such as in informal interactions and group patterns. George C. Homans analysed interactions in terms of rewards and costs. People try to maintain the behaviour that proves profitable. Kenneth E. Boulding’s conflict related perspectives mainly drew from economic models. He recognized that conflict can involve negative exchanges – more “bads” than “goods”, compared to economics, which mainly deals with positive exchange.

Dean Pruitt and Jeffrey Rubin paid attention to how conflicts could escalate. They identified five strategies of dealing with conflict – contending, yielding, problem solving, withdrawing and inaction. When both parties go for the contending strategy, conflict could escalate. Louis Kriesberg recognized the presence of intractable conflicts – conflicts which never seem to get resolved. He stressed that conflicts that seem easy to resolve initially may become intractable in the future while those that seem intractable may get resolved easily. Terrell Northrup expanded on the idea of intractability. According to her, intractable conflicts are those in which the parties are not only opposed to each other but which also strongly incorporates a central sense of identity.

Key Points

- Psychological theories locate conflict in the “minds of men”. Freud identifies it as ‘death instinct’ in human nature.
- Social Identity theorist like Henri Tajfel locates conflict in people’s allegiance to their group identities, which leads them to categorise the world as “us” and “them”.
- In the Seville Statement on Violence, a number of scientists critiqued the tendency to locate conflict and violence as inherent to human nature.

- Contingency Theories that locate conflict outside individuals – in social interactions, social processes and in the way society is organised.
- Social Process theories see conflict and conflict resolution as a process. Examples of it are Field theory; System's theory; Social Exchange theory.

SOCIAL STRUCTURAL THEORIES

Social structural theories emphasize on the organisation of society. It believes that the way society is organised or the divisions within society create the causes and conditions for conflict. These would include socio-economic aspects as well as race, religion, ethnicity, age and gender divisions. Apart from these, the world system is also a structure where states are the main players. Hans Morgenthau, an advocate of political realism, identified basic interests of the state as basis for its international policies. Johan Galtung, on the other hand, strongly believed in equality among nations and states.

Structural Violence Theory

According to the Structural Violence Theory, conflict is inherent in social structures. Social structures and institutions cause structural violence. Johan Galtung distinguished between three kinds of violence: direct or overt, indirect or structural and cultural. Direct violence intends to harm another individual or group directly and is a response to the experience of structural violence. In structural violence, institutions, systems and structures either discriminate between people or deny or deprive them of their rights and the ability to satisfy their basic human needs such as survival, well-being, safety, respect, freedom, identity, religion, etc. Cultural violence is used to justify and legitimize overt and structural violence through ideology, religion, language, arts, education etc.

Structural violence threatens the lives and livelihoods of individuals, groups, communities, etc. and prevents them from developing their potential and realising their goals. It can take the form of repression, exploitation and/or alienation. Here people could be exploited economically, repressed politically and/or alienated culturally by the structure. Slavery and colonialism are some of the examples of structural violence. Gandhi believed in creating new social arrangements free of structural violence. His approach to conflict resolution thus aimed to preserve the individual while systematically targeting the structure.

Human Needs Theory

The Human Needs Theory was propounded by John Burton. The theory believes that human beings have certain basic or universal human needs. When those are not met or remain unsatisfied, it can lead to conflict. The process of conflict resolution should thus look to satisfy the basic human needs of the people or groups involved in the conflict.

Human needs are seen as essentials or requirements that a person needs to live or continue and propagate life. These needs must be satisfied within the social context and not outside it. These basic human needs are material, cultural and social in nature. The material needs are food, shelter, health care, employment etc. The cultural needs are religion, language and the social ones are respect, dignity, safety and security. There can be no compromise on the basic human needs.

There is, however, no unanimity about the number and kinds of such needs. John Burton mentioned nine needs – consistency in response, stimulation, security, recognition, and distributive justice, appearance of rationality, meaning, control and role defence. Others have, however, expanded on the list of needs. Abraham Maslow came up with a needs pyramid in 1943, in which he described needs in a hierarchical manner. The base of Maslow's pyramid consists of physiological needs; the security needs are placed above it; then the belonging needs; followed by the esteem needs and on top are the self-actualisation needs.



Abraham Maslow's Need Pyramid

Gandhi too saw conflict as the result of structural denial of human needs. The creation of new structures is necessary for the satisfaction of human needs. This would require a method of struggle that satisfies three conditions: destruction of need-denying structures, creation of need-satisfying structures and respecting the needs of the conflicting parties during the struggle. The Gandhian approach to conflict resolution – Satyagraha, was an attempt to satisfy all three conditions. Gandhi saw self-realisation as the “highest” need but stressed that its fulfillment was dependent on the satisfaction of other needs.

Resource Theory

Conflict is caused when one party wants the resource the other has or when two or more parties want the same resource. People fight over resources because they are scarce or limited. Resources could be tangible or intangible. They could be in different forms such as land or territory, money, coal, oil, water, etc.

Max Weber classified resources into three categories: wealth, power and prestige. Wealth is a tangible resource which includes money, land etc. Power is a resource, for those who own and possess it and can make decisions about whether to allocate them or not and how to allocate them. Prestige means respect or reputation, which is based on ranking from the most respected to the less respected. It is a resource as all of us desire to have it but not all of us can have it.

Relative Deprivation Theory

Relative deprivation theory is based on the concept of deprivation, which indicates difference between what one expects in life and what s/he eventually gets. People

feel deprived when they get much less than what they have expected or what they have been promised. This can lead to aggression and make people enter into conflict with others. Absolute deprivation is associated with starvation and poverty. Ted Robert Gurr used the concept of relative deprivation in explaining ethnic conflicts.

Socio-Economic Theories

Karl Marx believed that structures of economic organisation lay the foundation for class conflict. The economic structure is thus the source of conflict. Marx in his theory of class conflict contends that social institutions and structures reflect the material reality of society. Economic structure has determined every other aspect of life including politics in the development of human history. The capitalists, who control the means of production or the economic structure also control and have power over the social structures. Such an economic system will always be exploitative of the working class and this will give rise to class conflict.

Neo-Marxists like Antonio Gramsci do not give too much emphasis to economic structures. Gramsci came up with the theory of “ideological hegemony”. He was of the opinion that capitalists not only control the means of production but also a host of other things like values, attitudes, beliefs, ideas, opinions, cultural norms, laws and rules. Ideology helps the ruling class in justifying its interests. When the ideological hegemony of the ruling class is challenged by the masses, it leads to conflict.

There are several other theorists who believe that the sources of conflict are located in the socio-economic divisions of the society. Max Weber related social conflict to social change. Ralf Dahrendorf argued that conflict is the main element that leads to social change. He stressed on both political as well as economic factors. Critical theorists like Max Horkheimer emphasized on the cultural effects of contemporary class divisions.

Check Your Progress Exercises 2

Note: i) Use of the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) Write a critical note on whether conflict is inherent in human beings. Substantiate with arguments.

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- 2) What are some of the social process theories?

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- 3) Describe some of the major social structural theories of conflict. What are the main arguments of the theories?

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FORMAL THEORIES

Within formal theories, social conflict is seen in terms of quantitatively expressed relationships and conflict resolution is viewed as stability in the dynamics of these relationships. Some of the formal theorists are Lewis Richardson, Von Neumann and Morgenstern. Richardson studied social conflict quantitatively. He used mathematical models to analyse the arms race. Von Neumann and Morgenstern developed the Theory of Utility, which represented human interests on an interval scale. They measured utility in terms of relative preferences – given a choice, what do humans prefer? Human interests, conflict and conflict resolution could be expressed and studied quantitatively. Game Theory was based on the theory of utility. It used mathematical analyses of conflicts of interest to evaluate the strategies of players. It also tried to determine how the players could best come together to resolve their conflicts. The game theory developed concepts such as zero-sum game (interests of both parties are opposed to each other) and non-zero sum game (has both competitive and cooperative elements).

Key points

- Social structural theories believe conflicts are caused by divisions within society.
- Structural violence theorists like Galtung argue that social structures and institutions perpetuate discrimination and use violence to do so.
- Human needs theory believes conflict arises when basic human needs are not met.
- According to resource theory, conflict arises over issues of resource (re)distribution.
- According to Relative deprivation theory, conflict arises when people feel deprived of things they expected in life or were promised.
- Socio-economic theorist like Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci locate sources of conflict in the socio-economic divisions of the society.
- Formal theories explain conflict by using logical or mathematical models, such as the game theory that developed concepts like zero – sum game.

LET US SUM UP

Theories of conflict view conflict as either inherent in human nature or nurtured in a social context. The nature part concentrates on biological and psychological aspects. The nurtured aspect focuses on social processes and social institutions

and structures. However, the nature versus nurture debate is long over. It has been firmly established that human behaviour is a consequence of interactions between biological, psychological, social and environmental factors. Within the broader frame work have been devised various theories.

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ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercises 1

- 1) Your answer should include theories and sources of conflict, human nature and debate on human behaviour.
- 2) Your answer should have the following points:
 - a) Human nature and conflict
- 3) Your answer should include theoretical approaches and the sources of conflict and social organisation of animals.
- 4) Your answer should highlight the following points:
 - a) Psychological theories and socio-psychological perspectives
 - b) Social identity theory

Check Your Progress Exercises 2

- 1) Your answer should include theoretical approaches to society and conflict, social process theories and system theory views.
- 2) Your answer should include structural violence and Gandhian views on human needs.
- 3) Your answer should highlight the following points
 - a) Resource Theory and
 - b) Socio- Economic Theories

