

Gandhian Approach to Conflict Resolution in Engineering Colleges

D.Das¹, R.K.Dubey²

¹Associate Professor, Haldia Institute of Technology, Haldia-721657

²Professor, Department of Applied Sciences and Humanities, Haldia Institute of Technology, Haldia-721657

Abstract: Conflict is a human phenomenon which is intrinsic and unavoidable in nature. Conflict is stated as a state of mind wherein personal emotions such as likes and dislikes due to various interactions within or with others. It creates a feeling that one has been severely discounted, challenges position or profession of individual that ultimately lead to a certain behavioral actions and reactions. Engineering colleges involves students and staff they are also human beings, are prone to one or other type of conflicts. It is nearly impossible to have a conflict free educational institute. The aim of the paper is to explore the reasons for the conflicts in engineering colleges with reference to Haldia Institute of technology and application of Gandhian model of conflict resolution for conflict resolution.

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a mind process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party (Wall J.J & Callister R.R, 1995), and the interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, dispute or dissonance within or between social entities (Rahim, M. A., 1992). In this study, conflict refers to some form of friction, disagreement, or discord arising within the engineering students when the beliefs or actions of other students and staff are either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more. It ranges from work issues of responsibility, power, authority, and ethics to interpersonal matters like misunderstandings, difference of opinion and poor communication, fighting complaining on anti ragging portal. Conflict can arise between members of the same department, same batch, same hostel different batch, and different hostel and involve violence, interpersonal discord, and psychological tension. If conflicts in colleges not handled in time there could be negative repercussions on learning and

development [Muhammad Nafees, Kamran Masood, Shaheen Ashraf Tahirkheli, 2012].

CLASSIFICATION OF CONFLICTS

A conflict can be small as disagreement or as large as a war. It can be originated in one person, between two or more people or between two or more groups (Devi 2012). The classifications of conflicts in engineering colleges are

- *Controversy conflict:* The conflict which occurs when one person's ideas, information, conclusion, theories and opinions are incompatible with another. This type of conflict is known as controversy conflict. Such types of conflicts can occur in class rooms mostly.
- *Conceptual conflicts:* Such type of conflict occurs when incompatible ideas exist simultaneously in his or her mind or when information did not seem fit with what one already knows.
- *Inter-personal conflicts:* The conflict can occur when the actions of one person attempting to maximize his or her goals to prevent, block or interfere with another person attempting to maximize personal goals.
- *Developmental Conflict:* Developmental conflict exists when dissenting activities between adult and child based on the opposing forces of firmness and change within the child cycles in and out of peak intensity as the child develops cognitively and socially (Devi 2012 p.07).

CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN ENGINEERING COLLEGES

Conflict resolution may be defined as the situation where the conflicting parties enter into an agreement

that solve their incompatibilities, disputes, problems and cease all violent actions against each other. A conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur. Conflict resolution otherwise known as reconciliation may also be used interchangeably with dispute resolution. A model that has been incompetently emphasized but holds out considerable potential is the Gandhian model of conflict resolution, where non-violence plays a catalytic role. Gandhi devoted his life to the perfection of non-violent technique of conflict resolution and everything he said and did was always conversant of non-violence.

Conflicts Resolved Through:

1. Coercion

One of the parties finds no other way, power disparities preclude reciprocity, primary concern in not yielding, or 'loss of face' an issue. 'Lumping', or Avoidance feeling of powerlessness; lack of will, ability, social sanction, alternatives.

2. Negotiation

When there exists at least one set of terms that each party would prefer to no agreement; dialectical-offers new approaches, interactive process of dialogue, learning, growth.

3. Mediation

Third party aids without decision-making power.

4. Arbitration

Parties voluntarily submit to arbitrator's decision; and

5. Adjudication

Legal intervention and decision. These involve coercive power, emphasis on norms, precedents, verdicts, zero-sum (both parties try to dominate) decisions.

Coercion, 'Lumping' or Avoidance are unilateral and competitive ways;

Negotiation is bilateral and cooperative.

Mediation involves third party and is cooperative.

Arbitration and Adjudication involve decisive control of third party and are competitive.

Conflicts may terminate in Compromise or in Forced Decisions.

6. 'Productive' Conflicts

Opponents jointly approach a mutually satisfactory solution with openness and are satisfied with the outcomes. Cooperation, compromise, trust, persuasion, conciliation, emphasis on mutual relations, help and similarities, responsiveness,

reciprocity, goodwill, credit-giving, negotiation, mediation, dialogue, understanding the opponent, stressing his valid points first, and nonviolence characterizes their resolution. Institutional and social norms and agencies may assist in resolution of competitive conflicts in a peaceful manner.

7. 'Destructive Conflicts'

'Winner takes all' approach, opponents are unhappy with the outcomes, have a sense of loss/defeat; conflicts tend to escalate. Competition, emphasis on extracting concessions, use of threats, coercion, ambiguity, rigid positions, deception, illegitimate means, non-negotiable demands, ignoring the minimum acceptable pay-off to the opponent and norms of fairness, litigation, and violence characterize these conflicts.

GANDHIAN MODEL OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

A model that has been incompetently emphasized but holds out considerable potential is the Gandhian model of conflict resolution, where non-violence plays a catalytic role. Gandhi devoted his life to the perfection of non-violent technique of conflict resolution and everything he said and did was always conversant of non-violence. He firmly believed that lasting peace in the world was possible only through non-violence. According to Gandhi in a conflict situation, there is no other plan than the adherence to non-violence in thought, word and deed. There is no other goal than to reach the truth. Gandhi argues that rational discussion and persuasion were the best way to resolve conflict. Gandhi suggested the methods of Satyagraha to resolve the conflict. He used this method both in India as well as in South Africa to resolve different kinds of conflicts. Not only Satyagraha, constructive programme of Gandhi is also an active method of attacking and removing social evils. In contemporary world there is need of Gandhi's Satyagraha in terms of resolving conflict.

CONCLUSION

Engineering education refers to teaching epistemology and professional practice of skills which includes undergraduate, postgraduate, and advanced engineering education. It is typically accompanied by examinations and supervised

training as the need for developing the skills of engineering. Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education in schools serve as the foundation for engineering education. The present Engineering education intends to equip our students with key transferable skills which empower them to meet the needs and requirements of frequently changing technological and professional expectations of engineers. The present century are a century of variations. Our life is full of materialistic ambitions and competitions, promotes the motion of conflict which further provokes violence especially in engineering colleges. Conflicts have been a constant phenomenon in the history of human race. With conflicts, there is disturbances, disorders and violence's among each other. In this regard Gandhi suggested Satyagraha. With this the opponent should be considered as an enemy to be destroyed or defeated. A satyagrahi should help him to become a better man. Competitions and conflicts should take the form of cooperation. For Gandhi non-violence is the most authentic, complete and simplified pattern for social, economic and political activities of society. Non-violence has the power to integrate societies and providing opportunities to people for their growth and prosperity. Gandhian approach provides us a way of developing the sentiments, motives, mutual trust and moral power, so that we must build a much stronger foundation for society than we now have.

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