

MANAGING STRESS AND CONFLICT IN **CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY**

Unit Structure

13.1 Objectives

13.2 Conflict

13.3 Conflict Management Mechanism

13.4 Stress management coping techniques

13.5 Maslow's theory of self actualization

13.6 Efforts towards building Peace and Harmony in society

13.7 Summary

13.8 Unit End Questions

13.1 OBJECTIVES

1. To Know why conflict take place.
2. To be aware how conflict can be managed.
3. To understand causes of stres and how it can be coped.
4. To realise ways of building peace and harmony in society.

13.2 CONFLICT

Meaning and Definition of conflict:-

Conflict is an interpersonal process that arises from disagreements over the goals to be attained or the methods to be used to accomplish them. It is a situation in which two or more parties feel themselves in opposition.

Types of conflict:-

Conflict can occur at three levels:

Intrapersonal conflict:

This conflict arises within an individual, because there is competition in business world or you can say that everywhere in the world. E.g. A manager may take up the role of providing better facilities to the employees, and at the same time may be responsible to reduce the operating the costs.

Interpersonal Conflict:

This conflict arises because of disagreement between two persons in an organization. It happens because difference of personality or temperaments among two or more individuals. E.g. it may be failures in communication among the people. Such conflicts pose a major problem because; they threaten the self-esteem and self-image of a person. Such conflicts may damage the relationships between people in an organization.

Intergroup Conflict:

It takes place when one group such as a department disagrees with another group. Due to the difference in viewpoint or thinking and honesty towards the organization intergroup conflict take place. A major cause for intergroup conflicts is competition for scarce resources. E.g. production department may want to install latest machinery and the marketing department may want to invest in setting up showrooms and organization able to satisfy only one department idea.

13.3 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT MECHANISM

The result of conflict may arise as positive or negative on the basis on how those involved choose to approach it. There are four conflict resolution mechanism or strategies mostly appear in the world.

Avoiding – Physical or mental withdrawal from the conflict.

Smoothing – Accommodating the other party's interests.

Forcing – Using power tactics to achieve a win.

Confronting – Facing the conflict directly, and working it through to a mutually satisfactory resolution.

The above approaches can be grouped into three basic conflict management mechanisms:

1. Win/Lose Strategy:

This approach eliminates the conflict by having one individual “win” over the other. In other words, an individual achieves his goals at the expense of others. Thus it can be said that this strategy may not allow maintaining good human relations.

2. Lose/Lose Strategy:

This view eliminates the conflict by having both individuals “lose” something. Instead of negative results faced by both the individuals, this technique can eliminate conflicts. It can be apply in three basic ways:

Compromise:

In it both the parties are asked to compromise. Each person involved must “give in” to the other.

Arbitration:

Here third party is going to take decision how to resolve the conflict. This view often gives result in problem solving solution.

Rules and Regulations: Following general rules and regulations can also resolve a conflict which may lead to lose/lose situation.

3. Win/Win Strategy:-

The aim of technique solves the problem instead of not shift the blame on others. The following issues are involved in this approach:

- Listen to all points of view.
- Define the basic issues.
- Create an atmosphere of the trust among all involved.
- Belief that problem will be solved on merit and not through personal or political influence.

This technique gives us appropriate solution that all parties accept it and, hence improves good human relations.

Check Your progress

1. Define Conflict
2. What is Intergroup Conflict?
3. Explain win/win strategy as a Conflict Management Mechanism.



13.4 STRESS MANAGEMENT COPING TECHNIQUES

There are two coping technique:

A. Problem focused coping: -

Problem focused coping is Lazarus term for the coping strategy of facing one's problems and trying to solve them by direct action. Psychologically, the problem focused coping is highly beneficial. It increases a person's sense of self-esteem, control and effectiveness.

B. Emotion focused coping:

This term used by Lazarus for responding to stress in an emotional manner, especially by using defence mechanisms.

Main ways of handling stress:-

1. Avoid unnecessary stress:-

- Learn how to say "No" - It may be in your personal life or may be in your professional life avoid or refused to accept added responsibility.
- Avoid the people who stress you out.
- Avoid hot-button topics.
- Make to-do list – analyze your schedule, and daily tasks.
- Avoid negative self talk.

2. Alter the situation:-

- Express your feelings instead of keeping inside.
- Be willing to compromise
- Be more assertive
- Time management

3. Adapt to the Stressor:-

- Reframe the problems – look to the problem in positive way

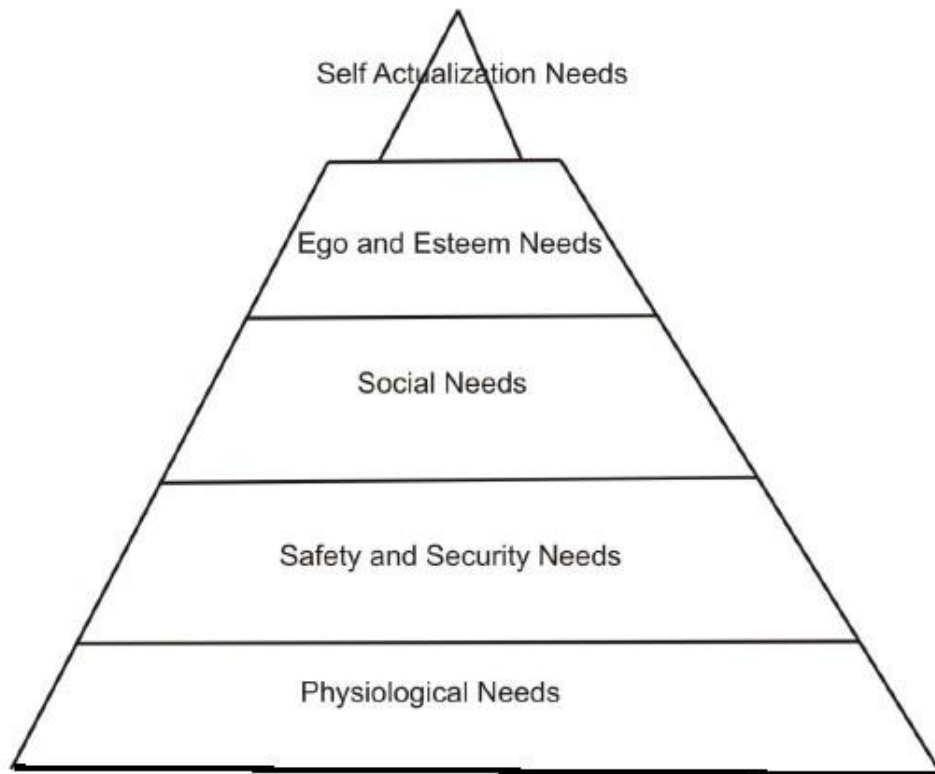
- Look at the big picture – analyze the stressful situation and then ask yourself how it should be long term important for me or not if your answer is no then let thing go.
 - Focus on positive self talk.
4. Accept the things you can't change:-
- Don't try to control uncontrollable
 - look for the upside – when facing major challenges, try to look at them as opportunities for personal growth
 - learn to forgive
5. Make time for fun and relaxation:-
- Go for a walk
 - Spend time in nature
 - Call a good friend
 - Write in your dairy
 - Play with kid
 - Play with pet
 - Curl up with a good book
 - Listen music
 - Watch a comedy
 - Set a site relaxation time
 - Do something you enjoy everyday
6. Adopt healthy life style:-
- Exercise regularly
 - Do yoga
 - Eat a healthy diet
 - Reduce caffeine and sugar – by reducing the amount of coffee, soft drinks, chocolate, and sugar snacks in your diet, you will feel more relaxed and you will sleep better.
 - Avoid alcohol, cigarettes and drugs
 - Get enough sleep

13.5 MASLOW'S THEORY OF SELF ACTUALIZATION

Definition and Meaning:-

Abraham Maslow innovate the theory of self actualization. Maslow identified five sets of human needs. The five sets of need are arranged in a hierarchy of their importance to individuals.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs includes the following:



1. Physiological Needs:

Basic needs of human being are physiological needs. Food clothing and shelter come under it. Such needs lie at the lowest level of hierarchy. According to Maslow, such needs are to be satisfied first and then the other needs.

2. Safety and Security Needs :-

This second needs come under the hierarchy of needs. People need:

- Safety of life and property
- Security of job, income and investment.

3. Social Needs:-

Human beings also feel the need to belong to a group or community. Nobody would prefer to live in isolation from the rest of the society or group. They prefer to be loved and cared by the others – i. e. their family members, work mates, friends, superiors and others.

4. Esteem Needs:-

It talks about the Ego needs. People always feel that others should respect them. People like others should praise and give recognition.

Everyone like other others should have good opinion about them in society/among the people.

5. Self actualization needs:-

These needs lie at the highest level of the hierarchy of needs. Very few people have such needs. Such needs induce a person to accomplish something special which others have not done. The need for challenging jobs, or the need for highest level of promotion comes from these needs. In other words, through self actualization needs, a person feels the need to realize one's potential to the highest possible level.

Salient features of Self –actualization theory:-

- People have a wide range of needs. The employees put in their efforts to satisfy their needs.
- Human needs are arranged into a hierarchy. There are some needs at the lower level, and there are some other needs at the higher level of hierarchy.
- Lower level needs must be satisfied either wholly or partly before higher level needs emerge. In other words, a higher level need does not become active, if lower level need remain unfulfilled.
- It is to be noted a satisfied need is not a motivator. In other words, it ceases to influence human behavior. It is the unsatisfied need that acts as a motivator.
- A higher level need arises before a lower level need is completely satisfied. Thus, safety needs would emerge before the physiological needs completely satisfied, and so on.

Criticism of Maslow's Theory of Self-actualization:-

1. When need is not satisfied, it becomes a motive. So cultures in which physiological needs like hunger and thirst are easily satisfied, physiological motives would not have much strength.
2. Maslow has organized human needs vertically; but it is possible to do so horizontally. Some people have simultaneous needs for physical comfort and safety, and for self-esteem and other higher needs. For example, a person

who is still seeking love may be strongly motivated by art and poetry. The latter needs are growth needs.

3. People who have satisfied their “lower” needs do not always seek “higher” ones. Maslow himself had pointed out that even if all the other needs are satisfied, people do not automatically become self-actualizers.
4. Some people aim to satisfy “higher” needs even at the cost of “lower” needs. Human history is full of examples of people who prefer to starve rather than be humiliated.

Check Your progress

1. State any two measures of coping with stress.
2. What is self-actualisation need?
3. What factors are covered under safety and security needs?

13.6 EFFORTS TOWARDS BUILDING PEACE AND HARMONY IN SOCIETY

Building peace is necessity of today’s world. Peace is the natural state balance and harmony with joy, exploration and excitement. The world is a beautiful place with immense opportunities for learning and positive excitement. The task of building peace start within the individual. The process of peace building is multi-layered. Many people believe wholeheartedly that peace needs to be built but have some difficulty in seeing where to start. Here are a few first ideas, based on the principle that lasting peace is best achieved through love.

- Make a new friend, later plan with him/her a peace building activity.
- Talk through your anxieties about getting involved with a friend. Plan to do something, however small.
- Identify one thing you are good at and see how to use it to build peace, locally, nationally or wider.
- Write a letter to someone in authority about a specific problem: put a possible peace building solution.

- Build or join a supportive network organization with an interest in peace building close to your own
- Put interested people in touch with existing organizations or each other.
- Have a neighborhood party or picnic to celebrate a happy event. Encourage conversation about peace building there.
- Offer your help to an individual or organization involved in building peace.
- Run or support a local peace festival with music, theatre, and games. Invite prominent local people; lobby them by offering your help in promoting peace.
- Organize a conference.
- Write an article outlining your ideas and vision.

Communal harmony is a solution to aggression and violence in Indian society. Communal harmony is an aspect of National Integration.

- To maintain harmony and peace introduce and learn the pluralistic nature of Indian society.
- Make psychological analysis of conflicts and stress.
- Follow the physical and psychological strategies to come out from frustration, conflicts and stress.
- When the conflict and stress occurs into public aggression and violence, at the same time one should understand group or mob or public psychology and deal with it.
- One should think ten times before resorting to aggression and violence publicly and its consequences.
- The political, religious, social, cultural parties, institutions and organizations who for personal gain and fame encourage communal riots, aggression and violence, they should be immediately banned from functioning and the leaders of them should be immediately imprisoned.
- Counseling sessions in forms of dramas, street play, poetry, songs, slogans, chart show, discussions, debates, and elocutions must be organized to bring communal harmony and peace. People in India must be given special lessons to maintain law and order and harmony and peace.