

UNIT V Organizational conflicts

Organizational conflicts arise when there are disagreements or clashes between individuals or groups within a workplace.

These conflicts can stem from a variety of sources, such as differences in values, goals, work styles, or communication breakdowns. Common types of organizational conflicts include interpersonal conflicts, role conflicts, and resource conflicts.

Interpersonal conflicts occur between employees due to personality differences or misunderstandings. Role conflicts happen when there is ambiguity or overlap in job responsibilities.

Resource conflicts arise when there is competition for limited resources like budget, time, or equipment.

Effective conflict management is crucial for maintaining a productive work environment.

Strategies for resolving conflicts include open communication, active listening, and seeking mutually beneficial solutions. Leadership plays a vital role in mediating conflicts and fostering a culture of collaboration and respect.

When managed well, conflicts can lead to positive outcomes such as improved problem-solving, innovation, and stronger team dynamics.

However, unresolved conflicts can result in decreased morale, reduced productivity, and increased employee turnover. Thus, addressing organizational conflicts promptly and effectively is essential for the overall health and success of an organization.

Causes and Consequences of Organizational Conflicts:

Organizational conflicts can be caused by a variety of factors, including poor communication, misalignment of goals, personality clashes, competition for resources, and unclear job roles.

These conflicts can have several consequences, both positive and negative. On the negative side, conflicts can lead to decreased employee morale, reduced productivity, and increased turnover. They can also cause stress and strain on professional relationships.

On the positive side, when managed effectively, conflicts can foster innovation, improve problem-solving, and strengthen team dynamics by addressing underlying issues and encouraging open communication.

Negotiations

Negotiation is a key strategy for resolving conflicts in organizations. It involves a dialogue between parties to reach a mutually acceptable agreement. Successful negotiations require effective communication, understanding the interests of both parties, and finding common ground.

Techniques such as active listening, empathy, and flexibility are essential. The aim is to achieve a win-win outcome where all parties feel their needs and concerns have been addressed.

Effective negotiation helps in maintaining professional relationships and ensuring long-term collaboration and satisfaction.

Team Building in Organizational Conflicts:

Team building activities are essential for fostering collaboration and improving group dynamics, especially in the face of conflicts.

These activities can include team retreats, collaborative projects, and workshops that focus on communication, trust-building, and conflict resolution skills.

Team building helps individuals understand each other's strengths and weaknesses, improves interpersonal relationships, and enhances team cohesion.

By strengthening the bonds between team members, organizations can create a more supportive and collaborative work environment, making it easier to navigate and resolve conflicts.

Resolution in Groups:

Conflict resolution in groups involves identifying the root cause of the conflict, facilitating open communication, and finding a mutually acceptable solution.

Effective resolution strategies include mediation, where a neutral third party helps facilitate the discussion, and collaborative problem-solving, where group members work together to find solutions.

The key is to address conflicts constructively, focusing on the issue rather than personal attacks, and fostering an environment of respect and understanding. Successful resolution leads to stronger team cohesion and improved group performance.

Problem-Solving Techniques:

Several problem-solving techniques can be applied to address conflicts in organizations.

These include brainstorming, where team members generate a variety of ideas and solutions; the Delphi technique, which involves anonymous input from experts; and the nominal group technique, which combines individual idea generation with group discussion.

Other methods include root cause analysis to identify the underlying issues and SWOT analysis to evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Effective problem-solving requires a structured approach, creative thinking, and collaboration, ensuring that conflicts are addressed comprehensively and constructively.

Stress and Its Types

Stress is the body's response to challenging or threatening situations. It can be classified into different types: acute stress, episodic acute stress, and chronic stress. Acute stress is short-term and arises from immediate threats, while episodic acute stress occurs frequently in individuals who regularly experience high levels of stress. Chronic stress is long-term and can result from ongoing issues such as work or personal problems. Each type of stress can have varying impacts on physical and mental health, including symptoms like headaches, fatigue, anxiety, and depression. Understanding the types of stress is crucial for identifying appropriate coping strategies.

Causative Factors of Stress in Organizations:

Stress in organizations can be caused by a variety of factors. High workloads and tight deadlines often lead to excessive pressure on employees.

Lack of control over work tasks and unclear job roles can create feelings of helplessness and confusion. Poor communication and conflicts with colleagues or supervisors contribute to a stressful work environment.

Organizational changes, such as mergers or layoffs, can also induce anxiety and uncertainty. Additionally, inadequate resources and support, job insecurity, and long working hours are significant stressors. Identifying these factors is essential for addressing and mitigating stress in the workplace.

Preventive Measures:

Preventive measures can help manage and reduce stress in organizations. Promoting a healthy work-life balance through flexible work arrangements and reasonable workloads is crucial.

Implementing effective communication channels and conflict resolution strategies can alleviate stress caused by misunderstandings and disputes. Providing employees with resources and support, such as counseling services and wellness programs, can enhance their ability to cope with stress.

Encouraging regular breaks and physical activity can improve overall well-being. Training managers to recognize signs of stress and provide support is also essential.

By fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment, organizations can significantly reduce stress levels among their employees.

Organizational Change and Process:

Organizational change refers to the process through which organizations transition from their current state to a desired future state to achieve specific goals.

This process can include changes in strategy, structure, processes, or culture. Successful organizational change often involves several steps:

identifying the need for change, planning the change, implementing the change, and evaluating the outcomes. Effective communication and leadership are crucial throughout this process to ensure that all stakeholders understand and support the change.

Organizational change can be driven by internal factors like new leadership or external factors like market competition and technological advancements.

Managing change effectively helps organizations stay competitive and responsive to evolving business environments.

Resistance to Change:

Resistance to change is a common phenomenon where individuals or groups push back against changes within an organization.

This resistance can stem from various factors, including fear of the unknown, loss of control, lack of trust in leadership, and concerns about competency.

Employees may also resist change if they feel it threatens their job security or disrupts established routines.

To address resistance, it is essential to involve employees in the change process, provide clear and consistent communication, and offer support and training.

Understanding the root causes of resistance and addressing them proactively can help smooth the transition and increase the likelihood of successful change implementation.

Organizational Development:

Organizational Development (OD) is a field of study and practice focused on improving organizational effectiveness and employee well-being.

OD involves planned, systematic efforts to enhance organizational structures, processes, and culture. This can include initiatives such as team-building activities, leadership development programs, and process improvement projects.

The goal of OD is to foster a more adaptive, innovative, and high-performing organization. It emphasizes the importance of continuous improvement, collaboration, and employee involvement.

OD practitioners use a variety of tools and methodologies to diagnose organizational issues, implement interventions, and measure outcomes.

OD Interventions:

OD interventions are structured activities designed to improve an organization's functioning.

These interventions can target various aspects of the organization, such as culture, processes, and people. Examples include team-building exercises, leadership training, process reengineering, and organizational redesign.

The success of OD interventions depends on careful planning, clear objectives, and ongoing assessment.

Interventions often follow a cyclical process that includes diagnosing problems, designing interventions, implementing changes, and evaluating results.

Effective OD interventions can lead to increased productivity, improved employee morale, and greater organizational adaptability.

Communication

□ **Meaning** = Exchange of ideas, facts, opinions, information and understanding between 2/ more persons.

- Elements of communication process:

- **Sender:** Sender is the person who wants to convey his thoughts or ideas to the receiver. So he represents the source of communication.

- **Message:** It is the content of ideas, feelings , suggestions etc. intended to be communicated.

- **Encoding:** This means that the message is transmitted through the use of language, actions ,

pictures and gestures.

- **Media:** It is the medium/path through which encoded message is transmitted to the receiver.

E.g. letter, telephone, e-mail, direct face-to-face interaction.

- **Decoding :** It involves interpreting the meaning of the message as intended by the sender.

- **Receiver:** He is the person who receives the message.

- **Feedback :** Feedback is the response that the receiver sends back to the sender after understanding his message.

- **Noise:** Noise means any obstruction or hindrance to communication. It may be caused to the sender, message or the receiver. Some examples of noise are:

- o Ineffective communication by the sender(manager) because of use of ambiguous symbols leading to faulty encoding, a poor telephone connection.

- o Inattentive receiver

- o gestures or postures that may distort the message.

- o Faulty decoding(attaching wrong meaning to messages), prejudices that obstruct understanding of the message.

Importance of Communication: An efficient system of communication :

1. Acts as a basis of coordination:

- ☐ Among departments, activities, persons

- ☐ Done by explaining goals, mode of their achievement and inter-relationship among different individuals etc.

2. Helps in smooth working of an enterprise:

- ☐ coordinate the human and physical elements of an organisation into an efficient and active working unit that achieves common objectives.

- ☐ When communication stops, organised activity ceases to exist.

3. Acts as a basis of decision making:

- ☐ Provides relevant information for decision making..

4. Increases managerial efficiency:

- ☐ Ensures quick and effective performance of managerial functions..

- ☐ Conveys goals, issues instructions, allocates responsibilities and looks after performance.

5. Promotes cooperation and industrial peace:

☐ Two way communication promotes cooperation and mutual understanding between workers and managers.

6. Establishes effective leadership:

☐ Basis of leadership, good communication skills influences subordinates.

7. Boosts morale and provides motivation:

☐ Enables managers to motivate, influence and satisfy subordinates.

☐ Assists workers in adjusting with physical aspects of work

☐ Basis of democratic management.

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION/TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

1. **Formal Communication** – follows the route formally laid down in the organization structure
 - a. **Downward Communication** – flow of communication from superior to subordinate
 - b. **Upward Communication** - flow of communication from subordinate to superior
 - c. **Horizontal Communication** – transmission of information among the positions at the same level of the Organization.
2. **Informal Communication or Grapevine** – Communication among people through informal contacts or relations.

Distinguish between Downward and Upward Communication

Down ward	Upward
From higher to lower levels	From lower to higher levels
Flow is downward	Flow is upward
Directive in nature	Non-directive
Purpose is to get plans implemented	Purpose is to provide feedback on results
Travels fast	Travels slowly
Orders, instructions, lectures, manuals, handbooks, etc are the main examples	Reports, suggestions, grievances, protests, surveys are the main examples.

Distinction between Formal and Informal Communication

Formal Communication	Informal Communication
Official Channel	Unofficial Channel
Deliberately Planned and Systematic	Unplanned and Spontaneous
Part of Organization Structure	Cuts across formal relationships
Oriented towards goals and task of the enterprises	Directed towards goals and need satisfaction of individuals

Impersonal	Personal and social
Stable and rigid	Flexible and instable
Slow and Structured	Fast and Unstructured

MEDIA OR METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

1. Oral Communication
2. Written Communication
3. Gestural Communication

ORAL COMMUNICATION

Oral Communication involves exchange of messages through spoken words. It may take place. i) by face- to face contacts ii) through mechanical devices like telephone.

Merits: Oral or Verbal communication offers the following advantages:

1. Economical
2. Personal touch
3. Speed
4. Flexibility
5. Quick response

Demerits: Oral Communication suffers from the following weaknesses-

1. Lack of record
2. Time Consuming
3. Lengthy message
4. Physical distance
5. Misunderstanding

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Written Communication is transmitted through written words in the form of letter, circular, memos, bulletins, instruction cards, manuals, handbooks, reports, returns,

Merits

1. Effectiveness
2. Lengthy messages
3. Economical
4. Repetition
5. Permanent record

6. Better response

Demerits

1. Time Consuming
2. Expensive
3. Inflexibility
4. Little secrecy
5. Lack of personal touch
6. Misunderstanding

Barriers To Effective Communication:

I. Semantic Barriers

☐ Sometimes the language of the sender may be very technical or incomprehensible to the receiver. Moreover words and sentences can be understood differently by different people in the organization, depending on their understanding level.

☐ They are:

i. ***Badly expressed message*** - use of wrong words or not using the needed words.

ii. ***Symbols with different meanings*** – If a word has several meanings, the receiver may perceive the meaning of the word differently from that intended by the sender e.g use of the words ‘value’, ‘right’ etc.

iii. ***Faulty translations*** – If the communications are originally drafted in one language and are then translated to the language understandable to the workers and if the translator is not proficient with both languages, mistakes may creep in causing different meanings to the communication.

iv. ***Unclear assumptions*** – when the worker does not understand, or may misunderstand the assumptions that the sender feels are implied. E.g the superior may instruct the subordinate ‘to take good care of the goods’. He may mean that the quality should be taken care of while producing, while the worker may understand that the goods should be kept safely.

v. **Technical jargon** - While explaining things to the subordinates, the superior may use technical jargon which may not be understood by the employees/workers.

vi. **Body language and gesture decoding** - Along with the verbal communication, another important mode of communication is body language and gestures shown by the person who is talking. If the verbal combination does not match his body language, then the employees may get confused and may misunderstand the meaning.

II. Psychological Barriers

The state on mind of both the sender and receiver may affect the communication and how it is comprehended .e.g a worried person may not be able to communicate properly. Similarly an angry person may not be able to receive the communication properly.

i. **Premature evaluation** - Sometimes people evaluate the meaning of the message even before it is completed by the sender. This shows that the receiver does not have an open mind and is jumping to conclusions without logically deducing it from the situation.

ii. **Lack of attention** - Sometimes when the sender is communicating, the receiver does not pay proper attention. This is because his mind is already preoccupied somewhere else. e.g an employee explains his problems to his boss, but the boss is preoccupied with a file. Boss does not understand the message and the employee is disappointed.

iii. **Loss by transmission and poor retention** - When communication passes through various levels, this results in filtering or loss of information. Also people may not be able to retain the information for a long time if they are inattentive or not interested.

iv. **Distrust** - If the parties don't have faith in each other/or believe each other, they will not be able to understand each other's message in the original sense.

III. Organizational Barriers

Factors related to the organization structure like rules and regulations, authority relationships etc may cause barriers to effective communication.

i. **Organizational policy** - If the organizational policy does not support free flow of information, it may result in barriers. E.g in a centralized organisation, people may not be encouraged to have a free communication.

- ii. **Rules and regulations** - Rigid rules and regulations may create barriers as this may lead to red tapism and delay in action.
- iii. **Status** - Sometimes people working at the higher level do not believe in the information provided by the lower level employees and they don't allow the subordinates to express their feelings freely.
- iv. **Complexity in organization structure** - When the information passes through various levels, there can be screening or filtering of information at different levels.e.g while giving feedback, the subordinates filter their negative points and only highlight their positive points.
- v. **Organisational facilities** - In a large organisation, free and effective flow of information is possible only when there are proper facilities like suggestion box, complaint box, social get togethers, etc. Lack of these facilities create communication problems.

IV. Personal Barriers

The personal factors of both the sender and the receiver may exert influence on effective communication. Some of the personal barriers are as follows:

- i. **Fear of challenge to authority** - Sometimes superiors withhold or suppress information, if they fear of losing their authority over subordinates.
- ii. **Lack of confidence of superior on his subordinates** - If the superiors do not trust the competency of the employees, they don't pay any attention to their advice, opinion or suggestions.
- iii. **Unwillingness to communicate** - Sometimes subordinates don't feel free to approach and communicate to the superior. This leads to barriers in communication.
- iv. **Lack of proper incentives** - If there is no incentive for communication then the subordinates may not take any initiative to communicate. E.g If there is no reward for a good suggestion; the subordinates may not be willing to offer useful suggestions.

Improving Communication Effectiveness

- 1. **Clarify the ideas before communication** - First of all the superior should himself be clear about the message. The entire idea, should be analysed in depth first by the superior and then

stated in a manner that is clearly conveyed to the subordinates.

2. **Communicate according to the needs of the receiver** - The manager should adjust his communication according to the education and understanding levels of the subordinates. This will make the receiver more receptive.

3. **Consult others before communicating** - It is always better to involve others in developing a plan for communication. Participation of subordinates may help gain ready acceptance and willing co-operation of subordinates.

4. **Be aware of languages, tone and content of message** - For an effective communication, the words and tone in a message must be selected carefully. The language used should not offend the sentiments of the listener. The message should be stimulating to evoke response from the listeners.

5. **Convey things of help and value to listeners** - Before conveying, it is better to know the interests and the needs of the people you are communicating. If the message relates to them, this will evoke response from them.

6. **Ensure proper feedback** - Communication is complete only when the receiver understands the message and gives his feedback. He should encourage the subordinates to respond to the communication.

7. **Communicate for present as well as future** - Communication must meet the needs of the present as well as future. There must be consistency in the past, present and future communication.

8. **Follow up communications** - There should be a proper follow up of the information given by the manager to the subordinates. This follow up helps to remove hurdles, misunderstanding of instructions given by the manager to his subordinates.

9. **Be a good listener** - Manager should be a good listener. Patient and attentive listening solves half of the problem.