

## PREFACE

Conflict has become a popular management topic. In addition to a large number of articles, special journal issues have been devoted to it, and number of books have appeared on this subject. A number of organisations now include conflict management in their training programme and courses in conflict management are offered at several business schools.

Conflict is inevitable. People have different ideas, perception and views and when they are to agree on one thing conflict emerges. It exists within each of us. It is present in the dealing of any two persons whose interests or relationships are interdependent. It is inherent in the life of every group and every organisation. They persist all around us. In us, our institutions and our society there is a persistent fear of conflict. This widespread fear engenders an emotional reaction, which culminates in a collective strategy calling for denial, control or if possible elimination. This fear of conflict makes us to react in a way where we either deny its existence or try to eliminate it at the first instance.

Conflict is a part of normal life. The conflict we experience range from individual conflict, intrapersonal conflicts to international conflicts. Those who studied organisations began to recognize that all organisations, by their very nature, had build-in conflicts. However, excessive levels of conflict can and do hinder organisational effectiveness. It shows itself in reduced job satisfaction by employees, increased absence and turnover and eventually in lower productivity. Again, without some level of constructive conflict an organization's survival will be in jeopardy. Survival can result only when an organisation is able to adapt to constant changes in the environment. Adaptation is possible only through change and change is stimulated by conflict. Conflict is the catalyst of change.

Within organisations, managers who manage conflict effectively are perceived as competent communicators and capable leaders. The senior

managers in most organisations praise and regard managers who maintain peace and harmony in their units, while disequilibrium, confrontation, and dissatisfaction are viewed negatively. As 'the absence of conflict' is the criteria by which manager's efficiency and effectiveness is evaluated, it should not be surprising to find that most managers are concerned with eliminating or suppressing all conflicts.

The present study carries out detail investigation into the different sources of conflict prevailing between workers and management in three tea growing areas of Darjeeling, Dooars and Terai areas in West Bengal. West Bengal is the second largest tea growing state in India. It accounts for 24% of the total area under tea. Tea is the only major economic activity of two district of the state namely Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri.

The tea garden workers of Dooars are mostly fourth generation descendants of indentured immigrants from tribal belts of Bihar, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh. The tea garden workers of Darjeeling are of Nepalese origin. These workers are exploited by the tea garden owners and force them to live in a sub-human condition with inadequate housing accommodation, scarcity of drinking water, little or no medical arrangement. In order to safeguard the interest of the migrated tea garden workers the government of India after independence passed a separate Act known as Plantation Labour Act 1951(PLA) in parliament more than 50 years ago. However, even today conflict between management and workers in the tea gardens are relating to non-implementation of Plantation Labour Act. The workers are deprived of the basic amenities like drinking water, housing, health, education etc. The poverty, illiteracy, abysmal living conditions and blatant exploitation of thousands of tea workers are the reality. Despite trade unions and social organisations being active, labour laws are openly flouted, basic facilities for the workers are woefully scarce; despite being stipulated by law, management at tea gardens are expert at bending rules to further their own interests.

For the research purpose, 50 sample tea gardens are chosen from Darjeeling, Dooars and Terai areas. The tea gardens of Darjeeling.

Dooars and Terai areas have equal representation in the sample. The data are collected through questionnaire. Four sets of Questionnaires have been prepared for i) the management ii) head clerk iii) the workers and iv) the trade union office bearers.

This study is divided into the following chapters:

Chapter 1 deals with the introductory discussions like statement of problem, justification of the study, objectives of the study, limitation of the study, review of literatures, research hypothesis.

Chapter 2 deals with research methodology, which includes Introduction, variable studies, sample size, collection of data, processing of data and statistical tools, used.

Chapter 3 contains analysis of findings from workers' point of view.

Chapter 4 contains analysis of findings from trade unions' point of view.

Chapter 5 contains analysis of findings from management's point of view.

Chapter 6 presents the concluding observations of the study.