Chapter I
Conflict and Conflict Resolution: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Conflict Resolution: Historical Evolution

Conflict Resolution has come to acquire the status of an independent discipline. Scholarly interest in this new field of the social science stream began in the 1950s. It further achieved heights during the intensive period of cold war when the development of nuclear weapons and the conflict between the superpowers seemed to threaten human survival. A handful of people in North America and Europe began to establish research groups to develop new ideas, part of which derived from the experiences of conflict management in industrial relations and from that of community mediations. Such efforts were not taken very seriously, but nonetheless, they generated a lot of interest among the scholars of peace and conflict studies. The field began to grow and spread wide. Institutions to study this newly emerging field were getting established and scholarly journals in the domain of conflict resolution were launched. By the 1980s, conflict resolution studies also started making some difference in existing conflicts, such as in Northern Ireland where groups inspired by new ideas had set up community relations initiatives that were reaching across community divides.

By the closing year of cold war, the climate for conflict resolution was changing radically that made a huge impact on the field. As a consequence of improved diplomatic relations between the superpowers and a sharp rise in the number of ethnic and other types of internal conflicts in different regions of the world, a new situation emerged in realm of international relations, which drew the attention of scholars of international relations and comparative politics. They came face to face of a variety of conflicts that had preoccupied...
their minds for many years. A rich cross-fertilization of ideas developed between conflict resolution and the traditional fields.¹

Conflict resolution approach grew as a critical and constructive analysis of some of the basic tenets of the conventional wisdom of conflict. Much of which was well formulated in the advise to the renaissance rulers of the 16th century Europe by the Florentine politician and diplomat Niccolo Machiavelli. The idea of conflict resolution was also prevalent in the strategic studies during the 19th and 20th centuries, especially within the so-called realist school of thought. Conflict resolution approach and peace research emerged as a criticism of the state-centric view of conflict what began as an intellectual struggle that Machiavelli developed into innovative approaches to the study of conflict. Machiavelli devised six basic issues for the understanding of the phenomena of conflict. These issues are:

- Violence/conflict is omnipresent and inevitable
- Conflict is instrumental
- Conflict is the ultimate source of power
- Conflicts are resolved through power and violence
- The state and the government are the primary actors of importance
- The state is independent.

These six state centric assumptions of conflict were dominant in western thinking until world war I. World War I began in the spirit of realist thinking that “conflict is inevitable". It was expected to proceed according to previously established timetables (Turkman 1962), but the war became devastating and took a form, which nobody anticipated. The traditional thought on war and the reality of World War I contradicted each other. This led to new thinking that helped in the evolution of conflict resolution and peace research studies.

¹Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, “Calling for a Broad Approach to Conflict Resolution”, in Manique Mckenkamp, Paul Van Tongeren and Hans Van de Veen, Searching for Peace in Central and South Asia (London: Lynne Piener, 2003), p. 29.
During this time, there began systematic and historically oriented study of the patterns and causes of war. During the 1920s and 1930s several comprehensive projects were initiated. No doubt, some systematic studies of war had already been made before World War I (Bloch 1899), but the pioneering efforts were made after 1920. Sorokin (1937) collected statistics on wars during Greek and Roman times and also about wars in different parts of the world after 1100. Wright (1942) studied the world from renaissance times and Richardson analysed “deadly quarrels” since the Nepoleonic age. The aftermath of World War I saw many efforts towards conflict resolution. Hopes were pinned on effective international organisations for the purpose of resolving conflicts. The League of Nations as well as international law were seen as possible roads to peace and conflict resolution.

The tradition of studying the causes of conflict evolved during the 1920s and 1930s set the tenor for research on conflict resolution. The correlates of war projects at the University of Michigan directed by J. David Singer was perhaps the most determined manifestation of this field of inquiry. A very rich database for inquiring into the grammar of conflicts and their resolution has been created by using sharp definitions and carefully designed data collection techniques (Small and Singer 1982). The work initiated by Istvan Kende in Budapest and Gantzel in Hamburg also belonged to this tradition (Kende 1971, Gantzel 1986).

The devastation of World War II was even greater than that of World War I. The World War II again underscored the inability of the power holders to predict the effect of their actions. So, the need to understand the causes of war remained important. Moreover, the World War II also gave rise to two new dangers: nuclear weapons and fierce conflict among victors. These post World War II problems gave birth to disarmament research and conflict theory. However, ‘conflict’ remains the most elusive factor in conflict resolution studies².

Conflict: Meaning and Conceptual Dimension

Conflict is a state of ongoing opposition between two or more parties. However, conflict in itself is not necessarily a bad thing. It is an essential ingredient for social change. Conflict can be both an opportunity and a threat. Conflict exists when a problem arises but there is no clear or immediate agreement on how the parties involved in the conflict can solve the problem. Conflicts are usually complex, concerned with personal, local, national or international issues in which there are several interrelated disputes.

Conflict is about the legitimate distribution of future costs and benefits among the inmates of a society. It often arises because somebody benefits at someone else's expense. Conflict is inevitable in the process of development. Conflicts are dynamic in nature and contextualised in space and time. It is pervasive more in realm of contradictions, incompatibilities and scarcities. It abounds all forms of human activity. It is about change in the social fabric of society in terms of distribution of resources, inter-state and intra-state relations. It is about learning and adapting to change. Conflict exists when two people wish to carry out acts, which are mutually inconsistent. Conflict is resolved when some mutually consisting set of actions is worked out. Conflict can be extended from single people to groups and more than two parties can be involved in the conflict. Therefore, a conflict must be defined in terms of wants or needs of the parties involved.

Conflict is a process characterised by stages of initiation, escalation, controlled maintenance, de-escalation and some kind of termination (e.g. Settlement resolution). First of all the distinction to be made is between disputes and conflicts. By dispute we mean those situations in which the

1. http://peaceforge.org/Peace_Forge/what_is_conflict
issues are negotiable in which there can be compromise and which, therefore, do not involve consideration of altered institutions and structures.\(^7\) Conflict is a kind of behaviour on the part of persons, groups or nations. It is the pivotal of all strategic thought. At different levels endeavours are being made to understand the nature of conflict, to formulate some theory of its causes. There is a difference between conflict and violence. Violence is a general term to describe actions, usually deliberate that cause or intend to cause injury. Conflict does not have to be violent, although it can become violent as the conflict escalates.\(^8\)

Conflict is an all-pervasive social phenomenon. It occurs at different levels of social life: inter/intra-personal, inter/intra-group, inter/intra-organisational and international. It prevails not only between social units but also within the different sets of social units, within nations as well as within groups.\(^9\) Conflict is usually assumed to arise between parties perceived to be involved in pursuance of incompatible objectives.

**Conflict: Definition and Assumptions**

Conflict refers to an ongoing state of hostility between two or more groups of people. The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines conflict as the "competitive or opposing action of incompatibles: antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interest or persons).\(^{10}\) It is defined as a situation "when two or more parties, with perceived incompatible goals, seek to undermine each other's goal-seeking capability. According to Galtung "an action system is said to be in conflict if the system has two or more incompatible goals status.\(^{11}\) Wallensteen defined conflict as a social situation


\(^8\) [http://peaceforge.org/Peace Forge/what_is_conflict/](http://peaceforge.org/Peace Forge/what_is_conflict/)


which involves a minimum number of two parties which may be individual
groups, organisations or nations who are striving to acquire the same set of
scarce resources at the same moment of time. This definition means that
conflict is a social phenomenon that involves a necessary condition 'scarcity'.
In addition, there are three basic requirements if scarcity is to lead to a
manifest conflict, one that poses a serious challenge to life and property:
actors, issues and actions. Obviously, there have to be organised actors,
parties for a conflict to become manifest and for actions to be possible. There
has to be a minimum of one issue of contention and at least two parties
simultaneously striving to acquire the same scarce resources. There has to be
actions i.e. conscious behaviour on the part of parties to achieve their goals.

Conflict can be defined as a disagreement through which the parties
involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns. Some typical
definitions of conflict include:

- Disagreeing with another.
- Difference of opinion with another.
- Complaints about our performance.
- Criticism of one's behaviour or attitude.
- Negative evaluation of one's performance.
- Fighting with another.
- Stress inducing event in which one confronts in a negative way.
- A test of one's power.
- An anger producing event.
- A threat to security.
- Taking a risk.
- A time when no one is communicating whether people are angry silently
  or are yelling at one another.

Peter Walsten, “Understanding Conflict Resolution: A Framework”, in Peter
Wallensteen, ed., Peace Research: Achievements and Challenges (Boulder and

Ibid.
someone acting in direct opposition to one’s request.

Defending rights when they are being ignored.

In a positive sense conflict can be a:

- Time of growth for the parties involved;
- Time in which problems can be solved creatively by looking together at a variety of alternatives.
- Chance to evaluate one’s performance objectively.
- Time for parties to increase knowledge of one-another.
- Chance to reveal unique ways of thinking, acting and feeling.
- Opportunity of parties to clarify their roles and functions in certain situations.
- Opportunity to clarify and define the rules of interaction in an attempt to strengthen relationships.
- Compromise that will leave all parties involved in a winning situation.
- Process by which feelings ultimately can be aired openly and freely.
- Time to talk and communicate openly and honestly, reducing hostility, anger or misunderstanding in relationships.
- Chance to ‘problem solve’ creating a more productive environment.

Typology of Conflicts

Cottey (1994) suggests eight general types of conflict, noting that it is neither exhaustive or complex political emergencies or modern disintegration wars may fit into more than one of these categories outlined below:

1. Inter-State War – Classical conflict between nation-state, involving government armed forces and challenges to a state’s territorial integrity e.g. Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Korean War 1950-53.

2. Low Level Cross-border Conflict – Conflict across state borders, but short of full-scale involving either more limited forms of armed action by

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government forces or armed forces outside government control, e.g. Lebanon-Israel; Sudan-Uganda-Zaire; Togo-Ghana.

3. **Armed challenge to Legitimate State Authority** – Use of armed forces by non-government groups to challenge what may be considered the legitimate authority of a government within a state – e.g. Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, UNITA in Angola.

4. **'Political'-Civil Conflict** – Conflict between states, fought for political control of the state and/or the political values the state is based on e.g. Tigray.

5. **'Secessionist' Civil War** – Conflict within states fought over the issue of whether a particular ethnic group has the right to secede on a regional basis, e.g. Nagorno Karabakh, Croatia, Eritrea, Bosnia; Crimea.

6. **Ethnic Civil War** – Conflict between ethnic groups within a state, where ethnic groups are not regionally divided and secession is not a central issue e.g. Rwanda; Afghanistan.

7. **Collapse of State Authority** – Situations where conflict has resulted in the collapse of central state authority and armed conflict continues e.g. Somalia.

8. **Genocide/Large Scale Loss of Human Life** – Situations where central state authorities are attempting to exterminate a particular ethnic group and other internal conflicts, resulting large-scale loss of human life, e.g. Iraq with regard to the Kurds and Marsh Arabs; the slaughter of minority Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994.¹⁵

Conflicts can be latent or manifest. A manifest conflict presupposes consciousness regarding the existence of mutually exclusive goals and scarcity of resources by organised actors. Manifest conflicts are conflicts that have developed to the extent that they are observable but have not been

expressed in a violent manner.\textsuperscript{16} Whereas in a latent conflict only one party
or an observer may be conscious of the existence of the conflict. Aggressive
manifest conflicts are conflicts that have escalated from manifest conflicts to a
violent level of expression. They are not merely capable of being noticed and
experienced but are also destructive to parties, resources and others as
well.\textsuperscript{17} Therefore, conflict at the manifest level is empirical observable and a
conscious act. At the latent level, it is theoretical, inferred and sub-conscious.

Subjective and objective approaches are the two main approaches
through which meanings are attributed to the various elements of conflicts. In
subjective approach conflicts are viewed in terms of values or resources.
They are not perceived to be built in the structure but rather worked out of
interaction between the relevant parties. In this, existence of two or more
parties, interaction between parties, which arise out of, perceived scarcity and
manifestation into conflict, which arises from the interplay of values and
choices, are emphasised. The obvious problem with this approach is that a
condition of scarcity may be there, but it may not be perceived as
incompatibility of goals and hence a conflict situation. In structural or objective
approach conflict is viewed as a social situation in which a minimum two
parties strive at the same moment in time to acquire the same set of scarce
resources. Therefore, the objective aspects are largely independent of the
parties' perceptions, including competition for power, scarce resources,
territory or other historically determined institutions and structures. The
objective elements of conflict are known as an instrumental source of conflict.
The subjective elements of conflict are known as expressive source of
conflict.

Conflict is a kind of behaviour on the part of groups or nations that
goes beyond the normal disagreements and confrontations. It is a behaviour
that has the potential of being destructive of persons, properties and systems.
There must be at least two actors for a conflict to exist. Parties may be

\textsuperscript{16} Herbert C. Kelmen, no. 6, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{17} Sandale, 1993, p. 6.
individual or collective. These parties may be primary parties whose goals are incompatible and who interact directly in pursuit of those respective goals and secondary parties which themselves are not directly involved. There must be a minimum of one issue of contention and incompatibility, which may be latent, may be recognised by one party or by a non-party. Scarcity of the content of the desired goal may be there.\textsuperscript{18}

There are direct and indirect conflicts or actions and structural conflicts. Direct or action conflicts refer consciousness about the incompatibilities. Parties to the conflict are aware of their goals as well as of the hindrances in the way of achieving these goals. In addition to awareness of the incompatibilities the parties have clear-cut attitudes about the contradictions. But in indirect or structural conflict situation is entirely different. In this parties to the conflict are not aware of their goals or incompatibilities and have no attitude about the goals and rivals. Thus, action or direct conflicts are conscious and indirect or structural conflicts are not conscious.\textsuperscript{19}

There are realistic or non-realistic conflicts. A realistic conflict involves utilization of means for specific ends. The source of these conflicts lies in people's conflicting claims to scarce resources and adherence to conflicting values. Whereas non-realistic conflict is an end in itself. It is an activity to release tensions. The sources of non-realistic conflict lie in frustration and deprivations stemming from the socialization process.

Conflicts have both destructive and constructive potential. The consequences of conflict can be destructive as well as constructive. The destructive consequences of conflict are, no doubt, dangerous because they enhance and increase the intensity and range of violence. Violent conflicts involve high cost both in terms resources as well as total systematic destruction. Violent conflict involves both physical or psychological harm or injury. The parties involved in a conflict start perceiving each other with hostility and antagonism as a consequence of the conflict. But conflict also

\textsuperscript{18} Ram, no. 9. p. 107.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, p. 108.
has a potential to be constructive. It creates opportunities for interaction between unequal parties and forces them to be rational. Equalising (putting parties on equal level), attention arresting (focusing attention on real problems), preventing social disintegration and re-establishing unit are the main positive consequences of the conflict.

A conflict highlights the claims to be considered. It provides the platform for "immediate and direct expression of rival claims". Conflicts are bound in all forms of social behaviour. In industries there are strikes, in international politics there are wars and threat of wars, in marriages there are quarrels and when people tire of acting out their conducts in these fields, they can always turn to support as a highly institutionalised and constrained form of conflict. These forms of conflicts are very different from each other; they are all recognised as conflict and have some common attributes. Thus, it is legitimate to look at conflict as a general form of conduct. Indeed it is agreeable that by the indirect route of examining other forms of conflict and then using the insight to examine the causes of war is the way to understand international conflict. But still some questions remain unanswered as: Why conflicts are taking place? What are its consequences? But these questions could be answered not fully but only partially by studying the strategic thinking of society at different intervals. “Our is a dangerous age in which the race between creative knowledge and destruction is close than even before. Destruction has not yet arrived and knowledge still has a chance. Those of us who have scientific training and ability should do everything in our power to speed up creation and slow destruction”.

Deep-rooted conflict includes cases of conflict with authorities, between authorities and among persons and groups within societies. The cases that arise out of demands on individuals to make certain adjustments in their behaviors are unacceptable and probably beyond human tolerance and

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21 Nicholson, no. 5, p. 3.
capabilities. Symptoms of deep-rooted conflict include hostage taking, illegal strikes, public protest movements, ethnic violence, terrorism, gang warfare and many other forms of intractable opposition to authorities at one social level or another.

Since the national interests of all the nations are neither fully compatible nor can be made so through conscious efforts. The existence of conflict and the emergency of disputes among nations is bound to be always there. The desires of nation, which motivate its actions, are based ultimately on needs or obligations, but these needs or obligations are justifiable only within their own self-contained system.

Conflicts are complex processes. However, there are certain basic elements of structure and process, which conflict situations have in common. One way of conceptualising the relationship between these elements is a triangle with Attitudes, Behaviours and Structure at the points. Each element influences and is influenced by the others (Box 1).

**Box 1: The Conflict Triangle**

![Conflict Triangle Diagram]

**Attitudes** include the parties' perceptions and misperceptions of each other and of themselves. These can be positive or negative, but in violent conflict parties tend to develop demeaning stereotypes of the other. Attitudes are often influenced by emotions such as fear, anger, bitterness and hatred.

**Behaviours** include cooperation or coercion, gestures signifying conciliation or hostility. Violent conflict behaviour is characterised by threats, coercion,
and destructive attacks. **Structures** refer to the political mechanisms processes and institutions that influence the distribution and satisfaction of security, recognition and identity needs.

Conflict is a dynamic process in which structure, attitudes and behaviours are constantly changing and influencing each other. A conflict emerges as parties’ interests come into conflict or the relationship they are in becomes oppressive. Conflict parties then begin to develop hostile attitudes and conflictual behaviour. The conflict formation starts to grow and develop. It may widen, draw in other parties, deepen and spread, generating secondary conflicts within the main parties or among outsiders who get sucked in. This often considerably complicates the task of addressing the original, core conflict. However, resolving the conflict must involve a set of dynamic, interdependent changes that involve de-escalation of conflict behaviour, change in attitudes and transformation of relationships or structures.²³

“Conflict formation results in analysis of the contradictions that are built into society: the organising of actors, the influence of the actors, structural positions (top dog/underdog), the acquiring of (military) capabilities i.e. analysis of actor preparation for action. This is the element that was most obviously lacking in the early attempt to establish conflict theory: the existence of actor was taken for granted”.²⁴ Conflict and parties involved in the conflicts are usually considered one and the same. Conflict and parties to the conflict are referred to frequently, interchangeable. Conflicts are not only related to or embedded into the parties who are waging conflicts. Nevertheless, conflicts also emanated from the actions and the issues taken up by the parties.

Conflict formation can arise out of social change, leading to processes of violent or non-violent conflict transformation. This can result in further social change in which suppressed or marginalised individuals or groups begin to articulate their interests and challenge existing norms and power structures.

²³ http://www.bradford.ac.uk/ac_ad/confres/discern/body-unit 1.

Box 2 shows a schematic illustration of the phases of conflict and forms of intervention that may be feasible at different stages. A schematic ‘life-cycle’ of conflict sees a progress from peaceful social change to conflict formation to violent conflict and then to conflict transformation and back to peaceful social change. But this is not the only path. The sequence can go from conflict formation to conflict transformation and back to social change, avoiding violence, or it can go from conflict formation to violent conflict back to the creation of fresh conflicts.25

Box 2: Conflict Dynamics and Conflict Resolution

Therefore, conflict is always about change. Conflict is about change in social structure and institutions in the distribution of resources, in human relations at many levels. It can be about who reduces the level or intensity of

http://www.bradford.ac.uk/ad/confres/dislearn/body-unit 1.
conflicts behaviour but it leaves the conflict situation substantially untouched. Resolution removes the very ground of dispute by eliminating or transforming the conflict situation. A settlement is preferable to violent conflicts.26

**Conflict Resolution**

Conflict Resolution is fundamentally aimed at understanding the sources and dynamics of conflict in order to develop more effective strategies and mechanisms for resolving human conflicts. Conflict Resolution implies that conflict is a complex phenomenon and its resolution implies an understanding of its nature in a multidimensional context. It also assumes that conflict is short-term phenomena that can be resolved permanently through mediation or the similar passive intervention processes.

Conflict Resolution requires an integrated approach to the problem, going back to the details and complex view of the situation that exists, removing the polarised view of reality. Changing attitudes is a complex process, often aided by getting the parties to recognise the others humanity. (This is the opposite of Dehumanization). Reducing attitudes of competition and increasing attitudes of trust and co-operation is easier before violence. (Often called confidence and security-building measures). Either way, resolution is often aided by describing the entire situation: recognising that there are many stakeholders and including time before and after the conflict rather than focusing on present atrocities.

Ideally, conflict resolution involves dealing with problems while they are manageable. Conflict Resolution can be defined as social situation where the armed conflicting parties in a (voluntary) agreement resolve to peacefully live with and dissolve – their basic incompatibilities and henceforth cease to use arms against each other. This means that the conflict is transformed from a violent to a non-violent behaviour by the parties themselves, not by somebody else, for instance, an outsider or third party. The first test of conflict resolution

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is that arms are no longer used. This means that a cease-fire and a process of demilitarization is initiated according to agreed plans. To the general public this is the first sign that the situation has actually changed. Then comes the implementation of the agreements' basic issues, which should follow soon. A next test is that the parties do not resort to violence or threat of violence in this phase.

Conflict Resolution can mean the moving of entire system of actors, issues and actions away from a focus on incompatibilities to a focus on compatibility. In this situation, it does not mean that there is no incompatibility. Though incompatibility is still there, but the focus is changed in order to reduce the emphasis on incompatibility. Such a strategy of diversion of interest could point out the many common interests that existed between the parties in the East-West conflict: ecological conflict, space exploration and poverty issues. In this situation, the existence of conflict between the parties is still there but the hope is to make the incompatibilities, recede sufficiently into the background for the conflict to become non-salient.27

Conflict could aim at transcending the incompatibilities, as the parties themselves perceive them. “Incompatibilities are defined as a situation in which two or more parties strive to acquire at the same moment in time the same scarce resources.”28 Thus, the concept of incompatibility is defined as the inability of meeting the demands of two or more parties at the same time with the available resources. Giving a certain resource to one party will mean that another party will not get its desired share. This is a more restricted use of the concept of conflict resolution. Conflict Resolution means finding a solution to the basic incompatibility between the relevant parties in such a way that they voluntarily express their consensus and satisfaction on the solutions to the conflict.29

8 Wallensteen, No. 11, p. 126.
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Conflict Resolution refers to a state of affairs in which the parties to a conflict agree to resolve the conflict by mutual efforts. And the solutions are to be acceptable to all of them without any condition imposed either by any of the parties involved in the conflict or by the third party. Thus parties enter into agreement. It means that the primary parties take responsibility for the accords and commit themselves to implement and legitimise them. “There remains the problem of conflict formation and peace formation: the transformation of their mutual relationship. This strategy involves dissolving existing conflict formations and transforming them into peace formations. The central issue is the relationship between the actors, probably the most basic, hence the most difficult issue of conflict analysis. One must first tackle the problem of the existence of parties as parties. If it is true that parties have the supreme value of ensuring their own survival as a party, the solution of conflict through the elimination of parties means the pursuit of conflict rather than the pursuit of peace”.30

There are other elements in the process of Conflict Resolution that require scrutiny, notably the notion of (voluntary) agreement. If one party uses force the fact that the opposite side does the same should not come as a surprise. The force of the other side is part of the equation. More interesting is the pressure from the outside world notably ‘secondary parties, those actors that do not directly commit their own troops or other regular military resources in the conflict, but still take sides and (openly or not) support a particular primary party. Secondary party can be extremely important for a primary party, both militarily (providing bases, routes for arms deliveries) and psychologically (making clear to the party that is it ‘not alone’). They may also have their own agenda, and thus, use their leverage on the primary parties. If secondary parties on either side agree on how the conflict should be ended, they may very well be in a position to impose this on the parties. In this way a local conflict may become part of a global conflagration, something that was constantly feared during the cold war (Nincic 1985). Therefore, a close

30 Ibid., p. 125.
relationship to outside actors may be necessary but could also be risky for a primary party. Thus it is noteworthy that agreements made under external pressure tend to be more short-lived than others (Nordquist 1992). Thus, agreements with a reasonable deal of voluntary involvement by the parties themselves are likely to last longer.

Conflict Resolution here is focused on an agreement. It is, as indicated, difficult to imagine that parties in a war would end their armed conflict and live side by side without some minimum form of understanding.\(^\text{31}\) It can be specified in an agreement, highly formalised as a treaty and it can also take other forms. But in some agreements, there is a need for conflict resolution for this. It specifies commitment by the parties for all. This agreement, furthermore, marks the end point of the armed phase of the conflict and beginning of something new. However, entering an agreement does not mean the same as ending a peace process. Agreement is only one part in a larger process.

Thus, by the resolution of conflict we mean the transformation of relationships in a particular case by the solution of the problems, which led to the conflictual behaviour in the first place, but such a transformation does not necessarily eliminate future problems in relationships.\(^\text{32}\)

**Conflict Resolution v/s Conflict Management**

Many terms are frequently and almost interchangeably, used in the field of conflict resolution to describe the activities and processes that bring conflict to an end.

Though conflict resolution and conflict management are used interchangeably, but in the discipline of conflict resolution, these two concepts are distinguished from each other in terms of their specific way of approaching the phenomena of conflict.


\(^\text{31\footnote{Burton, no. 7, p. 3.}}\)
Conflict management is often used as a generic term to cover the whole gamut of positive conflict handling, including settlement and resolution. However, conflict management considers that conflicts are long-term processes that often cannot be quickly resolved. The notion of management stipulates that in the long-term processes of conflict the people/parties who are involved can be controlled or directed to manage the conflict in certain limits. In other words, conflict management aims at controlling or reducing the volatility of the conflict—whereas conflict resolution considers conflict phenomena as a short-lived, if approached for its resolution at the earlier that can be resolved permanently by going deep into its roots through various non-violent and passive techniques like mediation, arbitration, and adjudication. Conflict Resolution is more ambitious, as it expects the parties to jointly face their incompatibility and find a way to live with and dissolve it.

Conflict management is not the same as conflict resolution. The latter—Conflict Resolution—refers to resolving the dispute to the approval of one or both parties, whereas the former—conflict management—concerns an ongoing process that may never have a resolution.

There are several possible outcomes, which are produced in conflict management. The most durable outcome is for the parties to be completely satisfied. This is called a ‘win-win’ resolution. Conflict management is often confused with conflict prevention or conflict control. It also suggests that conflicts have certain consequences for the parties involved as well as for the environment in which they occur. Conflict management is an attempt to feed learning into the process of conflict learning, which can make conflict more productive and less costly.

There are numerous factors, which may influence the process of conflict resolution. The most important of these are a) the characteristics of

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conflict parties; b) the nature of issues at stake c) the strategy and tactics employed by each party and d) the presence and activities of disinterested third parties; social system have wide variety of procedures for the management of conflicts. Conflicts can be managed by institutional forms (e.g. – collective bargaining) social roles (e.g. – third parties) or social norms.  

Methods for handling conflict involve various procedures, which are usually classified by the number of conflict management agents or parties involved. Of these perhaps the best-known method of managing conflicts are legal regulation, bargaining and negotiation. “When the bilateral conflict management techniques is direct bargaining, resolution is more likely when both parties to a dispute offer concessions at the bargaining tables.”

**Conflict Resolution v/s Conflict Settlement**

Conflict Resolution is also different from conflict settlement. Conflict settlement refers to an approach emphasising the reaching of agreement between the parties through negotiation and bargaining. A settlement in this definition means an agreement about the conflict issues that often involves a compromise or some concessions from both sides. Using this approach neither side may achieve all of their goals, but the disappointment may be offset by the mutuality of the compromise. Third party mediators in settlement-type process often use pressure, inducements and/or threats in order to compel the conflict parties to agree to a compromise solution.

A settlement is often the quickest solution to a difficult or violent situation. In practice, conflicts that have reached settlements are often re-opened later. The Versailles Peace Treat that ended World War I is one example of a settlement, which failed to resolve the causes of the conflict.

Conflict Resolution on the other hand is a more comprehensive
approach based on mutual problem-sharing between the conflict parties. Resolution of a conflict implies a solution acceptable to all concerned, which does not sacrifice any basic interest and which no party will later wish to repudiate. It implies that the deep-rooted sources of conflict are addressed, changing behaviour so it is no loner violent, attitudes so they are no longer hostile and structures so they are no longer exploitative. The process of conflict resolution includes becoming aware of a conflict, diagnosing its nature and applying appropriate methods in order to resolve the differences so as to achieve solutions that are not imposed. The solutions need to be agreed by all the key parties. The main differences between the settlement and resolution are shown in Box 3.

**Box 3: Approaches to Conflict**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement (Compromise)</th>
<th>Resolution (Cooperation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♦ <strong>Focus</strong> : Objective issues, short term</td>
<td>♦ <strong>Focus</strong> : Subjective Perceptions, Long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ <strong>Aim</strong> : Remove Conflict</td>
<td>♦ <strong>Aim</strong> : Remove causes of conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ <strong>Third Party</strong> : imposes solution, uses power/coercion, underlying needs not important.</td>
<td>♦ <strong>Third Party</strong> : Improves communication, elicits, win-win solutions, does not use coercion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Variants of Resolution**

There are unilateral, bilateral and multilateral conflict resolutions. In unilateral conflict resolution, one party tries to resolve a conflict without negotiating with another party. Coercive violence is a common form of unilateral conflict resolution, as when an army massacres unarmed persons in a village. Genocide – the disarmament and later extermination of an entire people – is the logical extreme of unilateral conflict resolution. Alternatively, one party can facilitate peaceful conflict resolution by conflict avoidance or
self-abnegation; that is one party may decide not to object to an action or a policy of another party. Another method of unilateral conflict resolution is to impose unilateral sanctions, such as a trade embargo, in order to force another government to change policies.

Bilateral conflict resolution can involve mutual coercion, including force or threat of force. Military confrontations and wars can continue until opposing parties negotiate a truce. When the bilateral conflict management technique is direct bargaining, resolution is more likely when both parties to a dispute offer concessions at the bargaining table. If the dispute is about a numerical matter, the parties can split the difference. If the dispute involves several issues, a concession on one issued can be traded for a concession on another issue. Indirect or tacit bargaining can also be used in bilateral conflict resolution.

Multilateral conflict resolution occurs when third party intervene into ongoing conflict situations to assist in conflict resolution. Thus, the three forms of third-party conflict resolution are pacific settlement, collective security and peaceful change.  

Resolution Techniques

Varieties of strategies are employed within the field of conflict resolution to manage and resolve conflict at all levels of social interaction. In practice, the most appropriate way to approach a particular conflict will vary according to the level on which it occurs. There are several forms of conflict resolution. Common forms of conflict resolution include:

Negotiation: is a discussion among two or more people/parties with the goal of reaching an agreement. It is a process whereby the parties to the conflict seek to settle or resolve their conflicts themselves. It is a process of direct communication between the conflicting parties, in an effort to reach a mutually
acceptable agreement. It is without the presence of a third-party facilitator.\footnote{39}

**Mediation:** is a voluntary and confidential process in which a neutral third-party facilitator helps people/parties discuss difficult issues and negotiate an agreement.\footnote{40} Mediation is a way of handling conflict in which two or more disputing parties meet with trained, impartial mediators in a good faith-attempt to resolve their issues. The mediators facilitate an exchange in which the parties clarify the issues, hear each other’s perspectives, provide new information and move towards an agreement. The mediators do not impose decisions or give advice. In fact, parties in mediation create their own solutions.\footnote{41}

**Conciliation or Facilitation:** It is close in meaning to pure mediation and refers to intermediary efforts to encourage the parties to move towards negotiations. Conciliation combine inquiry and mediation occasionally; parties call upon intermediaries to conduct an enquiry for impartial informations.\footnote{42}

There are two judicial forms of conflict resolution: Adjudication and Arbitration. Arbitration is a process in which a third-party neutral, after reviewing evidence and listening to arguments from both sides, issues a decision to settle the case. Thus, in arbitration two parties refer their dispute to an adhoc tribunal with instructions to apply specific norms or rules. The permanent court of arbitration was established at the Hague Conference of 1907. On the other side, in adjudication, conflict resolution process is conducted by the fixed number of Jurists (Judges) of the permanent court of international justice.

**Good Offices:** It is one of the several important forms of pacific settlement of conflict. A third party that extends good offices is one that promises to act as a go-between, that is, to pass messages back and forth between parties to a

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\footnote{39} http://www.bradford.ac.uk/acad/confres/dislearn/body-unit.1.
\footnote{40} http://www.odrc.org/u.gov/what-is-conflict-resolution.html.
\footnote{41} http://ballou.org/conflict.html.
\footnote{42} http://www.bradford.ac.uk/acad/confres/dislearn/body-unit.1.
Conflict Resolution: Theoretical Perspective

From the past few decades, conflict resolution, which includes negotiation, mediation and arbitration among others, has grown rapidly as an independent discipline. More and more people are finding that these techniques provide an efficient and cost effective means of setting personal, organisational and international conflicts. Conflict resolution is a peaceful and mutually satisfactory way to end or de-escalate a conflict. But, on the other hand, mediators, intermediaries, third parties etc. do not resolve conflict itself. They can only facilitate, directly involved parties in their endeavour to resolve their conflict. Therefore, the conflicting parties, which are directly involved into a conflict, can be considered as an actor in the process of conflict resolution. "By the resolution of conflict we mean the transformation of relationships in a particular case by the solution of the problems which led to the conflictual behaviour in the first place, such a transformation does not necessarily eliminate future problems in relationships".43

In the conflict resolution all the actors, issues and actions move away from a focus on incompatibility to a focus on compatibility. In this situation though incompatibilities are still there, but the focus is changed in order to reduce the emphasis on conflict. "It is useful to differentiate the termination of conflict by means of an agreement which removes the underlying source of conflict (Conflict Resolution) from those which achieve a settlement or concession of over hostility, but not the removal of underlying causes (settlement)."44 Conflict Resolution does not mean sweeping the issues of contention under the carpet. It aims at resolving them in such a way that in near future such conflicts should not resurface again. Thus, violence and conflict may be managed by instrumental action, but only identifying their root

43 Burton, no. 7, pp. 2-3.
causes can eliminate them. Those causes and their functions are, however, ever changing with the transformation of societies. Sometimes, which looks incompatible at one point of time, may transform into compatible during conflict resolution process and vice versa. Thus, time factor plays an important role in understanding and resolving conflict.

The World Society Paradigm

It suggests that conflict resolution offers a more viable outcome of conflict, because it converts the conflict into a shared problem. It sets up a process, in which both sides of conflict participate equally in finding solution, which are acceptable to both and which are self-sustaining. The resolution will be legitimised because both parties to the conflict will value it.45

Thus, conflict resolution processes occur after problems have arisen. The most critical element in conflict resolution is for the parties to want the resolution. If policy makers do not believe that they can achieve by unilateral action what they want, they look for "alternatives". At this stage there is scope for conflict resolution.46

Power Politics Paradigm and Conflict Resolution

Western theory of conflict resolution is based on power-politics paradigm. Conflict is a dynamic phenomenon. One actor is reacting to what another actor is doing, which leads to a renewed action. Conflict is considered something negative, a hindrance to be irrespective of the nature of the method. The most important here is the goal, the objective, nothing else and everything rest becomes weed. Conflict and parties to conflict are taken more or less synonymously. "Conflict means incompatibility: the source of incompatibility is the other party. He is not entitled to stay in my way, hence I am entitled to force him out of the way whether he agrees or not".47

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Conflict reflects the unwanted presence of the second party factor. The opponent party is taken as an antagonist, the intruder and his very “being” is treated as conflict. If one party attempts to get in touch with the other party, it is normally understood as a sign of weakness. If the process of conflict resolution solutions are not to be mutually derived at rather to be imposed on others. Moreover, the antagonist has to be defeated. His acceptance of the imposed solution is not the point, but the point is his defeat. His defeat make him realise that he has been marginalised in the power game and has been reduced to pygmy. To secure victory over the opponent the form of techniques is immaterial. The coercion is inbuilt in the power politics paradigm. The paradigm is premised on the use of or and threat of force to settle the conflict.\textsuperscript{48} Thus, conflict resolution here means terminating conflict by methods that are analytical and that get to the root of problem. Conflict Resolution, as opposed to mere management or settlement points an outcome that in view of the parties involved there should be a permanent solution to the problem.

“Overall the twentieth century has been somewhat more conflict prone that the preceding eras but not startlingly more so”.\textsuperscript{49} The problem is people and their nature moreover the aggressive behaviour is considered as the root cause of conflicts. Thus, new techniques and methodologies are required for the proper understanding and meaningful resolution of conflict. In broad terms, the goal of conflict resolution is to bring about a long term or permanent solution to conflict by ultimately addressing the root causes of the problem. This implies that some changes will have to take place. The process leading to this change is normally built around a number of threads that set the framework for conflict resolution to be effective. Analytical approaches, a problem solving orientation are the major threads.

\textsuperscript{48} Ram, no. 9, p. 110.

Analytical Problem-Solving Conflict Resolution

Analytical problem solving deals with identifying the possible causes of the conflict under consideration.\textsuperscript{50} This approach is a first step in the direction of conflict resolution where power based resolution has to give way to an analytical explanation of the totality of human-relationship. This approach is based on world society paradigm. It further gives rise to a new situation or ‘another set of relationships’. Thus, problem solving treats the issue of conflict resolution as an ongoing process. The goal of problem solving conflict resolution is not merely removing the cause of discord (conflict prevention) but also to create conditions for co-operative relationship.

Another characteristic of problem solving approach is that it deals with a conflict situation in a holistic way, in its total environment. Conflicts spread their roots in different dimensions in different environments. For a resolution of conflict, problem solving aims at reaching the sources and origins of the conflict. There lies somewhere deep hidden the root causes of conflict behind some immediate causal factors of a conflict. Problem solving approach aims at providing the necessary background to all these important segments of conflict and resolution.

Analytical problem solving conflict resolution is based on the assumption that conflict is a normal and universal phenomenon-generic in essence. In conflict situations the human participants are struggling in their institutional environment to satisfy universal needs: security, identity, recognition and development. The denial of these needs may lead to conflict. The goal of problem solving approach is social psychological in nature. They seek to “produce change in individual as a vehicle for change in policies and actions of political system”.\textsuperscript{51} The problem solving treats the issue of conflict resolution as an ongoing process. Every new situation needs new set of


techniques, new knowledge and conceptualisation. The reference to past events and chronicles may not help. Each new challenge needs to be tackled afresh with innovative measures. Problem solving meets this challenge by incorporating the element of analytical intervention into the conflict setting. It concerned with analysis of relationship not with normative rules and past events".52

These processes are different from their counterparts in the power-based conflict resolution in the sense that they help parties to understand and solve the conflict on their own in a mutually collaborative manner. The role of third party has been reduced to act as facilitator. Thus, the role of the third party is not like that of traditional mediators who set down norms. It neither proposes nor imposes solution. It helps the process "whereby solutions will emerge out of the interaction between the parties themselves".53 Thus, the role of the facilitators in analytical problem solving is primarily to assist dialogue and communication among the adversaries. The task of the third party is to provide atmosphere for the adversaries to come together. In other words, the analytical problem solving process aims at making power in all its forms redundant while keeping in view that it multiplies conflicts and helps them escalate into war sooner or later.

In brief, we can say that conflict resolution and its (conflict) analysis is a decision making process. Conflict resolution deals with peacefully reaching out to the roots of the conflict so that it may transcend the conflict situation to a higher level for the benefits of all the contending parties. Some recent developments in the domain of conflict and conflict resolution have led to the emergence of keen interest in formulating theoretical parameters for the understanding as well as resolution of conflicts.

Burton, no. 7. p. 206.

Ibid., p. 204.