

Birla Institute of Technology and Science Pilani- K.K. Birla Goa Campus
Semester I: 2019-2020
Mid-semester Test
Introduction To Conflict Management (GS F311)

05-10-19 (11AM-12:30PM)

Total Marks: 30

1. Answer the following questions: (6 Marks)
 - a. Discuss the role of power in conflict with relevant example/s. (3)
 - b. Differentiate between implied and applied power with example/s. (3)

2. Answer the following questions: (6 Marks)
 - a. Discuss how interest differs from need with relevant example/s. (2)
 - b. Based on your learning from the current course, if you need to identify the probable cause/s of a conflict, what framework will you consult and why? (4)

3. Read the following cases and answer: (8 Marks)
 - a. Sara is the head of the Sunshine Committee at her job. The committee's goal is to plan celebrations, group events, and team-building activities. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the Sunshine Committee is fulfilling what needs for the employees? Why do you think so? (1+1)

 - b. You and your friend are in the shopping complex and someone misbehaves with your friend. You reacted instantly and slapped the person. Identify the style and the dominant dimension of the conflict. (1+1)

 - c. Greta Thunberg, 16 years old, is a Swedish environmental activist focused on the risks posed by climate change. If you want to assess the cause of Greta's conflict, what component in the Need Continuum you would focus on? What type of power (based on sources) explains her position in this conflict? (1+1)

 - d. Ron is working as an IT professional in an MNC for last two years and expecting a promotion. A month before appraisal, his boss calls him and asks for a personal favour (teaching mathematics to his son for free). He also mentioned that, if Ron executes the work, he would be considered for the promotion. Ron agrees to the deal. What according to you is the power dynamics (based on its application) between Ron and his boss ? why do you think so? (1+1)

4. Read the following case and answer the questions:

Kodaikanal Mercury Poisoning: Unilever's thermometer plant in Kodaikanal exposed many workers to mercury poisoning, without giving them any protective equipment or information about the disastrous health effects of mercury. This toxic mercury, dumped around the factory and in forests, continues to contaminate soil and groundwater, affecting thousands. The workers cannot afford private healthcare, and have been fighting since 2001, asking Unilever to clean up the toxic contamination, and to compensate them for their medical expenses.

Hindustan Unilever (the Indian subsidiary of the Anglo-Dutch giant Unilever) is avoiding its responsibilities to its workers exposed to mercury in the thermometer factory it owned in Kodaikanal and closed in 2001. Kodaikanal is a hill station retreat at 2,200 metres high in the flourishing forests of the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu, South India. The factory site, as well as the surrounding area, are contaminated by mercury, including ground and surface water. Workers, local citizens and environmentalists have been fighting for the company to face its liability, also in the Madras High Court. Despite a partial decontamination of the factory site in 2003, the case is still pending and the conflict ongoing.

The factory, placed in the middle of the city, produced nearly 10 million thermometers a year (about 75,000 a day) for export to the West. It is the story of how a global corporation took advantage of lax laws in a developing country to run a second-hand plant full of ageing equipment that compromised on safety and waste management. In fact, the mercury thermometer factory was relocated to India in the early 80s because it was too dangerous to run in New York, and would not comply with US legislation.

In early 2001, public interest groups unearthed a pile of broken glass thermometers with remains of Mercury from an interior of part of the shola forest, which they suspected could have come from the company. In March, a public protest led by local workers' union and international environmental organisation Greenpeace forced the company to shut down the factory. Soon the company admitted that it did dispose of mercury contaminated waste, but refuse to face its liability. 550 men and women claim that their work at Hindustan Unilever's Kodaikanal factory caused irreparable damage to their health. They say that at least 23 of their colleagues have died young, and that their causes of death reveal complications resulting from mercury exposure: lung problems, heart problems, and kidney failure. Most of the ex-workers report varying symptoms, including: headache, skin problems, eye problems, chest pain, dental problems, nose bleed, vomiting, blooded urine, breathing problems, impotency, irregular menstruation, miscarriage, giddiness, tremors, and inability to grip

effectively. “These symptoms are classic symptoms of occupational mercury poisoning” Dr Linda Jones of Massey University, an expert in neurobehavioral assessment in mercury poisoning, commented to the magazine Frontline. “Mercury,” Dr Jones said, “is the third most toxic element in the world after arsenic and lead.” “Mercury vapour,” Dr Jones explains, “gets absorbed through the mucous membrane [when you breathe], gets into the blood stream, and goes straight into the brain.” The workers did not get any compensation, and they formed the Ex-Mercury Employees Welfare Association in the early 2000s. Their president, S.A. Mahindran, filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) suit in the Madras High Court. The association wants an economic rehabilitation scheme and a healthcare treatment and monitoring programme at the company's expense for everyone who ever worked in the factory. It also wants the company prosecuted. On the contrary, Hindustan Unilever denies that any of the health problems of the workers or their families was the result of mercury exposure in the factory.

UPDATE: After nearly 15 years of campaigning, on March 9, 2016, Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) agreed to a financial settlement for an undisclosed sum with a group of 591 workers who had sued the company for health damage due to mercury pollution, the details of which weren't shared with media. However, the activists involved said it was a landmark settlement and the amount was a new record for India. (<https://ejatlas.org/conflict/hindustan-unilever-thermometer-factory-kodaikanal-tamil-nadu-india>)

Answer the following questions:

(10 Marks)

- A. Analyse the conflict by highlighting the agencies, dimensions, types, and approaches/s. (2)
 - B. What according to you is the dominant dimension/s of the conflict and why? (2)
 - C. Discuss the cause/s of conflict referring Mayer's Wheel. (3)
 - D. Identify the types of power dynamics involved in this conflict. Justify your answer. (3)
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