

1.0 CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

Conflict is an intrinsic feature in every activity that involves man and his fellow man; it is what pushes him along. What would have been of man without conflict, the same would have been of an automobile without the four stroke engine-induction, compression, power and exhaust; these mount a great deal of pressure to the engine which results to the kinetic ability of the automobile. Conflict performs in a man what the propeller does to an aircraft. That human being has evolved overtime is as a result of conflict. It can be conflict with his environment, his fellow man, and even himself. The primitive man was not contented with his state at that time; the limited variety of foods he eats, his unclad state, and where he lives. He was at conflict with all these things. This conflict now propelled him, mounted pressure on him like the pressure mounted on the automobile by the four stroke engine; he had to make moves to resolve these perturbing issues. This led to the invention of agricultural tools, clothing, and secured shelter. Thus, man's life has continued to improve all these years, and we owe it all to conflict. This buttresses what David in Oyeniyi (2011) says, "Conflict is an inevitable outcome in human diversity and a world without conflict is not desirable, because it will mean a world without diversity." Into the bargain, Ibietan (2013) notches it when he says,

Yet, the lack of conflict on the other hand, seems to be problematic. In its absence, groups become too cohesive and its members avoid dissension. Alternatives are not adequately explored, and groups, acting as if possessed of a common and single mind, become obsessed with certain decisions that prove later, often at much cost, to be utter nonsense.

However, does it mean that conflict is everything but unfavourable to man? Does it mean that conflict does not have its own adverse effects? Not at all. In fact, the negative side of conflict has shaped most people's perception about it, as most definitions of it are streamlined to depict conflict as not worthwhile. Mayer (n.d) tries to give reasons to this when he says, "We all are of two minds about conflict. We say that conflict is natural, inevitable, necessary, and normal, and that the problem is not the existence of conflict but how we handle it." To iterate Mayer's last words, the problem of conflict is how we handle it. This now heralds us to the major term in our topic, conflict resolution.

Consequently, conflict has come to stay; the quandary now is how we can ameliorate its adverse effects in order to achieve peace. There are many ways of settling conflict, this means, there are many dynamics of conflict resolution. One among them is the dynamics of bargaining. However, we are going to give in-depth definitions of these terms in the subsequent section.

1.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.2.1 Dynamics:

Dynamics according to Merriam Webster Dictionary is the pattern or process of change, growth, or activity.

Dynamics is the way in which things or people react, and affect each other. (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English)

1.2.2 Bargaining:

An agreement between parties fixing obligations that each promises to carry out. (The free dictionary by Farlex)

Bargaining is the discussion between people in order to reach agreement on something such as prices, wages, working conditions, etc. (Cambridge Business Dictionary)

1.2.3 Conflict:

An active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles. (Cambridge Dictionary)

According to an online dictionary, dictionary.com, conflict means to come into collision or disagreement; be contradictory, at variance, or in opposition: clash.

1.2.4 Resolution:

When someone solves a problem, argument, or difficult situation. (Longman dictionary of contemporary English).

Moreover, having known what conflict and resolution is, what then is conflict resolution? Conflict resolution according to Lopez (n.d) is the process by which discrepancies are reduced and, eventually, is eliminated to the point where one that is satisfactory to the majority of the group is chosen. Simply put, conflict resolution is the process of settling a conflict.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 SOURCES OF CONFLICT

We deemed it necessary to deliberate on this because it will be more efficacious if we know the causes of conflict prior to its resolution. Mayer (n.d) in listing the sources of conflict posits five of them which he says are the major. We'll be elucidating them below.

2.1.1 Communication

Conflict is inevitable if communication is stymied. Miscommunication arises when one communicates wrongly to another. Conflict frequently escalates because people act on the assumption that they have communicated accurately when they have not. (Mayer, n.d)

2.1.2 Emotion

Emotion does to conflict what the fuel does to fire. People often react, most of the times, violently when they feel that they have been hurt by somebody or group of persons. Emotions of anger, hatred, ire, depression, envy, jealousy, among others cause conflict.

2.1.3 Values

Values include what people cherish and respect. Africans value culture, and view any incoming information from a cultural lens. And if such information tries to infringe their culture (value), they react negatively. This often results to conflict.

2.1.4 Structure

A structure can be seen as an external framework in which interaction takes place or an issue develops. For example, an opinion poll might be organized to ascertain the peoples mind

regarding a particular government policy. This opinion poll is the structure on which the interaction takes place. And if not handled very well might result to conflict.

2.1.5 History

The history of the people who are participating in conflict has a great role to play in that conflict. When people remember that their historical pasts have been filled with conflict issues and incompatible interests, their conflict tends to linger. For example, the nation of Israel and some neighboring states like Palestine have been in war for a long period of time, now this tends to exacerbate their conflict issues up till this time.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 THE DYNAMICS OF BARGAINING AS A METHOD OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Now that we understand what the meanings of the individual words that make up this term are, what then does it mean? Bargaining can be seen as negotiation, how does negotiation work in settling conflict? We'll be treating this course based on Nigerian experiences.

To have a successful bargaining in conflict resolution, the negotiator or the parties involved should according to Mayer (n.d) know the nature of the conflict. Is the conflict born out of perception, emotion (feeling) or behavioural (action)? When two people or groups perceive or think that they are not in good terms, this can be seen as a conflict based on perception. They might not act it out, but the thought alone is a conflict. Again, a person might have a feeling that another does not like him, or might have a feeling of hatred towards the other; this conflict can be termed to be emotional. Lastly, when one or both groups behave or do things in order to hurt the other, the conflict can now be said to be behavioural. However, these natures of conflict are not mutually exclusive, in that a conflict can be cognitive (perception), emotional and behavioural. By one thinking that one is in conflict with another, one can develop that feeling of hatred or incompatibility. As this feeling beams up, one can show it through action.

Consequently, the nature of conflict between the labour union and the Nigerian government can be seen to encompass the three natures treated above. Every Nigerian worker thinks and also feels that the government is his/her potential enemy. Therefore, any bargain or negotiation can only be successful if it adequately addresses all the natures of the conflict. For example, if the labour union decides to take some industrial actions, the government will try to negotiate by increasing their salaries or paying overdue ones. This kind of bargaining will only

end the conflict at its behavioural level (industrial actions), but will it erase that feeling or thought of hatred by one or both groups? Could this be the reason why, in Nigeria, despite the salary increment and others, conflict still lingers among these groups? This then begs the question, how can a bargaining be structured in order to meet up with the all the natures involved in a conflict? This now heralds us into the issue of interest. A negotiation can only be successful when the incompatibility of interests is addressed. Despite the salary increment, as in the case between Nigerian government and the labour union, conflict still lingers. This then means that salary increment might only be one of the positions of labour union and not their interest. However, the interests of the labour union may include good working conditions; thereby salary increment might only be a fringe of the interest but not solely the interest, because, there are other necessities embedded in that term, “good working conditions” This then avers that, for a successful bargaining or negotiation to take place, there should be an understanding of the interests of the groups involved in the conflict. For it is only when interest is understood, and majors taken to address it that the natures of a particular conflict can be resolved.

However, how can both parties (labour union and the government) understand their lapses and interests? This introduces us to what is called collective bargaining. Collective bargaining involves the process of union organization of employees, negotiation, administration, and interpretation of collective agreements covering issues such as wages, hours of works, separation, works and its allocation between workers or group of workers. (Ngu in Ibietan, 2013). Ocheni (2013) also posits that collective bargaining provides a legal channel for upward communication. He also goes ahead to define it as a process of negotiation between an organization (employer) and its employees (or their union) on employment terms and conditions

of service and remuneration. Thus, both parties, especially the employer (government) should embrace collective bargaining.

Moreover, we will succinctly be looking at another case study in Nigeria as regards to bargaining. The issue between the Niger-delta communities and some oil companies, how has it fared? Has the issue truly been resolved? How has both parties especially the oil companies managed the conflict, what is the mode of bargaining? According to Amodu (2012), the interest of the host communities in acceptance of these oil companies was for these companies to aid in the development of their communities. From what can be seen, most of these oil companies have helped in “developing” these communities by providing them with some basic infrastructural amenities like schools, clinics, power supply, and so on. But despite this, these communities still agitates. Does it mean that they are greedy and never satisfied, or could it be another thing? How can clinics and schools survive in a degraded and polluted land, polluted water and polluted air? From this, it could be seen that these companies are only satisfying the peripheral aspect of development, while the core issues which form the nucleus of the people’s interests are yet to be addressed. This means that the mode of bargaining must be restructured to address the interest of the people.

3.2 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, bargaining in conflict resolution entails both parties, including the arbitrator to ab initio understand their interests, and also know the nature of the conflict, then provide suitable structures for an effective negotiation.

4.0 REFERENCES

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