



Doctors as a Manager, Managing Conflicts and Union

Keshab Mukhopadhyay & Ritesh Singh

West Bengal University of Health Sciences, Kalyani, West Bengal, India

Abstract

Doctors are not formally trained in management in our country. After passing MBBS, new medical graduates are often posted in the rural or urban primary health centers where they have to do administrative work beside clinical duties. Many a times, they fail and thus the working of the respective health centre is affected. There are many theories of management which should be taught to a medical graduate during his undergraduate days.

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Doctor Managing a Health Centre

Doctors after passing MBBS are often posted as Medical Officers in rural hospital. They do not have any formal training in management. The most difficult to manage are the human resources. A newly posted doctor manager is usually the boss in the rural health centre. Many a times subordinates are senior in age and posted in the same centre for a long time and try to dominate the working place which often gives rise to ego clash and conflicts between the doctor and staff.

Conflict arises out of contradiction in perception of needs or thinking in a person from others. Sources of conflict may be misunderstanding between groups. Personal variables like perceptions, attitude, emotional break up influence the origin of conflict. A dogmatic authoritarian attitude with low esteem is potential conflict producing candidate. If conflict is out, it may spread to frustrate other individuals in the group and may lead to violence like aggression, strikes or lockout. There are two types of conflicts which an individual can face with himself:

1. **Role conflicts:** It arises when the person performs job which is different from what is expected from him.
2. **Goal conflict:** A person has to achieve many goals. Many a times, there is competition between achieving goals.

The conflict is inevitable, but the manager has to resolve it. This conflicting situation can be handled by one of the following ways:

1. **Win - lose:** Here one group tries to seek their goal and other loses.
2. **Lose - lose:** Assertiveness and cooperativeness is low in both the groups. Both group members walk out of the discussion.
3. **Lose - win:** Here one party is willing to compromise.
4. **Win - win:** Here both parties are concerned of each other's problems and cooperate.

Doctor Managing Medical Students

Nowadays, the student's agitation has come out as a conflicting situation. The doctors who are teachers also need expertise to solve this situation. Some of the suggestions to manage those conflicting situations are:

1. The role definition may solve individual conflict.
2. Participative management may solve inter group conflict. The manager should take everybody into confidence.
3. Authentic communication and genuine respect for each other prevents many conflicts as communication gap is responsible for many conflicts.

Hospital has been declared as an industry nowadays. The industrial relation as defined by Metcalf is "composite result of the attitude and approaches of employers and employee towards each other about planning, supervision, direction and coordination of the activities of an organization with minimum friction, maximum cooperation with regard to wellbeing of the organization". Its different components are participants, issues structure and boundaries.

Trade Union

The Trade Union is one of the powerful socio-economic institutions of modern times. In organization, all the employees are at the mercy of the employers and workers lack the bargaining power. Webb has defined trade union as a continuous association of wage earners to improve conditions of working lives. Trade Union Act 1926 defined trade unionism as any combination (temporary or permanent) formed primarily for the purpose of regulating the relations between workers and employers. There are three forms of trade unionism.

1. **Classical:** Protects the interest of the members.
2. **Neo-classical:** This improves other wider issues like tax relief.
3. **Revolutionary:** Tries to establish rule of workers by revolutionary means like violence.

Basically, its attention is on salaries, working conditions, disciplines, welfare negotiations, safeguarding organization health and interest. But, unfortunately many trade unions has made their union as trade.

Doctors as a manager have to deal with both blue collared and white collared union which is a herculean task. Perhaps, the good listener can solve many problems.

Industrial Relation

Industrial relation per se is a separate discipline and it has many different interdisciplinary inputs like sociology, psychology, law, politics, economics, accounting etc. The different writers have tried various functional approaches for industrial relation. Some of those are:

1. Dunlop's approach by Prof. T. Dunlop of Harvard University has mentioned it has three components - the actor i.e., a manager itself, context and philosophy of the manager.
2. **Oxford approach:** Here stress is given to procedural rules and collective bargaining. Here trade unions are external organization.
3. G. Margarison's industrial sociologist says conflict of job content, technology with its distribution; structure and human relation should be resolved by collective bargaining and structural analysis. It has been observed that a man who is close to manager or who has power to dispose money enjoys more facilities.
4. **In action theory approach:** The manager or actor acts as a coalition leader.
5. **Marxist theory:** According to him, industrial relations are politicized, and a part of class struggle is described by the power relationship between capital and labour.
6. **Pluralistic approach:** It focuses on resolution of conflicts than generating it. It has been found that at each level of an industry there is some rule breaker. A unpunctual workers will try to justify their role.
7. **Gandhian Approach:** He had tremendous faith on goodness of man. According to him, many evils of the world are due to wrong system and none by wrong man. According to him the strike should be seen as grievances without violence.
8. Weber's social action approach questions increased realization and bureaucratization is responsible for many industrial conflicts including hospitals.

Dealing with Trade Unions

Since there is no rule for representative union, so multiple union crops up which sets up union rivalry and ultimately hampers work of the organization. To minimize the union rivalry, following recommendation of National Commission of labour should be implemented.

- a) Eliminate party politics and outsiders. Local leaders inside the campus should be produced.
- b) Promote collective bargaining.
- c) Recognition of union and encouraging its security.
- d) Labour should be empowered to settle inter union disputes.

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Authors' Profile

Keshab Mukhopadhyay is presently working as Principal and Professor of Pharmacology, College of Medicine and JNM Hospital, West Bengal University of Health Sciences, Kalyani, West Bengal, India. He has more than two decades of teaching and administrative experience. He has authored many books for undergraduate medical students. After accepting the offer of the Head of the institution, he has to manage conflict regularly. Squeezing time out of his busy day, he gets into his teacher's shoes and teaches UG and PG medical students.

Ritesh Singh is working as Associate Professor of Community Medicine, College of Medicine and JNM Hospital, West Bengal University of Health Sciences, Kalyani, West Bengal, India. He is a researcher, academician, and clinician. He is a guest faculty at the Institute of Public Health, Kalyani and teaches Health management to the students.
