

Corona Lockdown: Resolving conflicts in Housing societies

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Abstract: The global social emergency, Corona Lockdown has transformed the world. So destructive and lethal is Corona it has put almost all the countries of the world to go into defensive posture by enforcing lockdowns. These lockdowns generate conflicts. This study deals with the resolution of conflicts in Housing societies of NCR region. The design of the paper follows a structured approach. Commencing with the process of defining the topic and an extensive literature review the following research questions were formulated (a) what constitutes conflict during the lockdown period in housing societies? (b) what core components of conflict are needed to be addressed, on priority, so as to ensure effective compliance to governments' order? The next stage moved to the process of designing questionnaire. The responses were collected by means of Google Forms. Descriptive statistical techniques were applied for data analysis. The findings indicate that conflicts have different meanings for different class of respondents and accordingly RWA's must devise action plan for managing the conflicts which will be interest of the residents as well as meeting the compliance of government directives. The limitation is the small sample size of 380 and the incremental increase of lockdown period which generated the feeling of getting used to it. The contribution to the study is that this study deals with the conflicts arising due to current crisis. Future recommendations that since Corona is here to stay and that it is generating new trends and patterns which itself will generate new conflicts and hence new avenues for research. The conclusion of the study is the fact that conflict must be scoped or defined unambiguously and once defined the core components must be identified by stakeholders so as to ensure that day to day operations are performed efficiently and effectively for resolving the conflict.

Keywords: Conflict, Components, Resolution, Restrictions

I. INTRODUCTION

The world today is in lockdown mode due to Corona affect. So destructive is the Corona attack that it is now being labelled as *third World War*. This war is different from the earlier world wars. For, not a single bullet was fired, yet the number of casualties is phenomenal and is perpetually increasing on hourly basis. A catastrophe like Corona generates conflicts. Each conflict is required to be resolved and afterwards it must be managed within the bounds of the constraints imposed by societies, government institutions and other governing bodies.

This research study deals resolving conflicts in housing societies in the NCR region. From the above, it can be construed that students are required to be taught in a manner which will remove their dilemma of metrics or matrices.

1.1. Literature Review

According to researcher, Tjosvold, Dean (2006), there has been no significant attempt towards the definition of the word conflict and the type of the outcome it generates whether

positive or negative. Further, in corroboration, he contends that it is for this lack of standard definition that conflict is thought to be negative and that when conflict is managed well it generates positive outcome. Researchers, (Mack and Snyder, 1957; Pondy, 1967; Schmidt and Kochan, 1972) in their study concluded that conflict is seen to arise from opposing interests involving resources which are scarce. In the same context, researchers (Bacharach and Lawler, 1981; Kochan and Verma, 1983; Walton and McKersie, 1965) in their study concluded that conflicts have mixed-motive relationships with people having competitive and co-operative interests.

An extant review of literature reveals that researchers have addressed conflicts from different perspectives. For example, researchers (Amason, 1996; Anderson, 1983; Cosier, 1978; George, 1974; Gruenfeld, 1995; Mason and Mitroff, 1981; Peterson and Nemeth, 1996; Schweiger et al., 1986; Tetlock et al., 1994) have addressed the issue of conflicts from the value that conflicts brings about in making decisions which are needed to the address the issues facing the society at large. On the other hand, researchers have addressed the issue of

conflicts in terms of the type of the impact it has on the society whether it is positive or negative.

In the present scenario, with CORONA lockdown enforce, conflicts resolution has assumed an important significance. The significance arises from the fact that CORONA phenomenon has unleashed a new era on the society by forcing the government to impose lock down so as to prevent the community spread of the virus. It is in this context that this paper is developed to study the conflicts and their resolution in housing societies of NCR region.

1.2. Research Question

The corona lockdown has transformed the means and mechanism of managing ourselves both inside the house and how we manage within the housing society wherein the authors reside. It is in this context that the following research questions are formulated.

- a. What constitutes conflict during the lockdown period in housing societies?
- b. What core components of conflict are needed to be addressed on priority so as to ensure effective compliance to government order and hence in resolution of conflict?

1.3. Research Methodology

A structured methodology was adopted for this study. It started with the process of formulation of topic. The authors, who reside in the housing societies of NCR region, were forced to stay indoors due to lockdown restrictions imposed by government and by the respective Residents Welfare Authority (RWA). As per the directions by the government, these restrictions were to implemented strictly with 100% compliance. Thus, many of the privileges were withdrawn. This led to the generation of conflicts and subsequently to the formulation of topic for research study .

Upon finalization of the topic, the next step was focussed on literature review and the formulation of the research questions. The literature review revealed several dimensions to conflict and its resolution. However, the literature review failed to address conflict in terms of specific contexts pertaining to lockdown and in its implications in housing societies. Finally, the authors deliberated and concluded the research questions as it was felt that the research questions is appropriate to the present circumstances wherein people are forced to live indoors and also to ensure that the conflicts are resolved.

The research design process involved the breakdown of the components into three layers. These are the residents, the Vendors and the RWA executives. This has been done deliberately as these formed the core stakeholders in the conflict resolution process. Though there were other stakeholders but they have been left out deliberately from the study. The residents chosen for the study comprised of the group, Housewives, Students, Executives and the Retired persons. The other stakeholders RWA and the vendors have been taken into the study as they too are part of the conflict resolution process.

Once the research questions were formulated, the next stage moved on to the process of formulation of questionnaire. The questionnaire was a structured one and comprised of two parts. The first part gathered the demographic information of the residents while the second part captured the information pertaining to conflict which the people faced. The numbers of questions in the questionnaire were 10.

The sampling applied in the study was random sampling. The reason attributed to random sampling is the fact that the scope of the study was limited to residents of housing societies and in these societies everyone is directly or indirectly exposed to conflicts including school going children.

The response of the questionnaire was collected by means of Google forms and the sample size was reduced to 380 after verification and validation. The statistical analysis techniques

used in the study is the descriptive technique comprising of frequency distribution tables. The reason attributed to the usage of descriptive technique is to generate a report which will assist decision makers in making decisions by keeping the interest of the residents and also to ensure the compliance of the governments' order. MS excel software version 2010 was used for carrying out statistical analysis.

1.4. Findings

a. Demographic Distribution

Table 1 below depicts the demographic distribution of the respondents

Table 1: Depiction of demographic distribution of the respondents

Age (in yrs.)	Occupation	Count
Less than 20 yrs	Student	150
Age between 20-41 yrs	Housewife	62
Age between 41-56 yrs	Executive	120
Age above 56	Retired	48

The distribution of the above table reveals a significant pattern in terms of the responses provided by the residents of the housing society. It is observed that the majority of the respondents are from the student and executive category. This is significant to the fact that during lockdowns online medium is an alternative which supplements the need for establishing network albeit in virtual mode. In other words, these two classes of the residents believe in the maxim *work should not stop. It must go on.* When relating these two classes of residents to the research study of the paper, it indicates that conflict is given the highest priority to the availability of network connectivity. In case, if there is any hindrance in the network connectivity then this class of residents will make an all out efforts to ensure that this is established at the earliest. Also, in these difficult times, the network vendor, too ensures

that connectivity is provided to the residents unhindered else there would be severe consequences which will impact the business survival. The role of the RWA in resolving the network connectivity issue is minimal and hence it is given least priority as far as managing the Conflict is concerned.

b. Conflict definition

Table 2 below depicts the various perspective given by housewives in defining conflicts under the Corona scenario.

Table 2: Depiction of the various perspective of conflict by housewives in the current Corona scenario

Occupation	Defining perspective i.e. what constitutes conflict	Count
Housewife	Restriction on purchase of quantity of food items	44
	Availability of food items on available time slots only	8
	Restrictions on purchase and availability of food items for children	7
	Restrictions on purchase and availability of household goods with such as sanitizer, restrictions	3

A close examination and interpretation of the above table reveals an interesting insight. Majority of the housewives place top priority on the restrictions imposed by authorities to the quantity of the food items while the other factors such as timings, restrictions of purchase of items for children and household goods such as sanitizer takes a back seat. This may be interpreted in the fact that it is the food which invariably takes the critical position in times of crisis. Hence maintaining the food supply chain and its stock is of prime importance. Also, during lock down periods, it becomes the responsibility of the vendors, the RWA and the government authorities to resolve the conflicts pertaining to food items. Any delay or dilly dally on this core component will defeat the whole purpose of containment of the Corona. Hence, vendors and RWA worked out a close co-ordination with one another

and thus ensure that proper supply chain is made available by imposing restrictions such as taking online payments, restrictions on number of food items, maintain social distance and above all encouraging the vendors and the residents not to hoard food items. In this manner they can ensure compliance to government’s directives as well as well as in ensuring the resolution of the conflicting issues.

Table 3 below depicts the various perspective given by students in defining conflicts under the Corona scenario.

Table 3: Depiction of the various perspective of conflict by students in the current Corona scenario

Occupation	Defining perspective i.e. what constitutes conflict	Count
Students	Network Services such as Internet	110
	Availability of Fast Food in the society food court or eating joints	2
	Restriction of Delivery of items by E-commerce Websites	36
	Restriction or closure of Health care services in Society such as Gym and Swimming	2

A close examination and interpretation of the above table depicts an interesting scenario. Top priority is given to internet services for which the government authorities and the concerned vendors can directly address the conflicts for resolution. On the other hand the next in line is the priority provided by home delivery of items by e-commerce websites. This again is highly dependent on the government and the concerned vendors however, RWA’s in this case can work out modalities for the delivery of the items to the residents by ensuring that strict compliance to governments’ order is maintained at all times. Healthcare services and fast food eating joints are not so high priority and can be easily handled by students at home. Hence for resolving these conflicts, RWA’s put up various posters and leaflets for guiding people to stay indoors and do proper exercises and maintain clean

hygiene so as to ward off the threat arising out of Corona scenario.

Table 4 below depicts the various perspective given by students in defining conflicts under the Corona scenario.

Table 4: Depiction of the various perspective of conflict by executives in the current Corona scenario

Occupation	Defining perspective i.e. what constitutes conflict	Count
Executives	Restriction on walking in the premises while talking to client/ boss / team members etc. for official discussions	78
	Restrictions on Morning and evening walk	30
	Restrictions on moving out of the society in cars more than 2 times in a day	9
	Restrictions on gym facilities	3

Analysis of the above table reveals an interesting scenario. Executives are running their offices on 24 x 7 basis. In the absence of physical presence on the office premises, cell phone is the only alternative which provides the connectivity to the executives with office employee. Putting restrictions on the movement of executive within the society premises constitutes conflict and which must be resolved in an amicable manner by the residents as well as the RWA. For residents require some kind of movement and RWA are bounded by government’s directive. Hence, the need for an amicable resolution to this conflict and this was resolved that residents were permitted to walk in their corridor in their respective floors by maintaining social distance.

Table 5 below depicts the various perspective given by students in defining conflicts under the Corona scenario.

Table 5: Depiction of the various perspective of conflict by retired persons in the current Corona scenario

Occupation	Defining perspective i.e. what constitutes conflict	Count
Retired	Availability of medicines at any time of the day	40
Persons	Morning Walk	3
	Usage of community hall for meeting purposes	5

The analysis of the table 5 reveals that retired persons place highest priority on the availability of the medicines at any time of the day. This conflict is resolved by the RWA in various manner such as home delivery of medicines and taking online payments and the ensuring that for old and disabled residents, regular staff members delivered the medicines by wearing proper protective gear. On the other hand the usage of community hall is least priority and RWA's are bound by government's order and the resolution to this conflict can be done only by the go ahead signal by government.

1.5. Limitations

The limitation that came out of the study is the small sample size. A large sample size would have generated a better picture of the conflicts and the resolution which the residents and the RWA's of housing societies have faced during lockdown period. Other limitation that came forth during the study was the incremental increase of lockdown by the government which resulted in more or less of the feeling of getting used to it and thereby not much new information could be extracted from the respondents.

1.6. Contribution to Study

The contribution to the study is the fact that this is the first instance wherein the entire country is forced to stay indoors due to social emergency. It is in these testing times that conflicts and their resolution is needed on top priority on account of uncertainties on various dimensions such as purchase of food with restrictions, limited movement within the society and outside the society and the like. A research

study in these crucial times will provide sufficient empirical data for in-depth study and to develop action plans for future.

1.7. Future Recommendations

The future recommendations of the study lie in the fact that the affects of CORONA is here to stay for a sufficient period of time. Moving ahead with the various research study by medical fraternity, it is observed that Corona is generating discernable patterns and each of them is more lethal and destructive in nature which essentially translates to the fact that it is capable of generating more challenging conflicts and hence an extensive area of research in addition to housing societies in NCR region.

II. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the study lies in the fact that when it comes to conflict resolution, in the time of global social emergency, housing societies in NCR regions must necessarily formulate criterion as to what will *constitute a conflict* in the context of parameters which are essential for running the essential services of housing society as well as meeting the compliance enforced by government. Once the criterion for defining conflict is addressed the next step is to identify the core components which will ensure compliance to government's directives and also to the requirements of the residents of society and to RWA as well. Once these are taken care off the modalities for translating these into action plans can be worked out with minimal scope for emergence of *new* conflicts.

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