05 Conflict Resolution in a Democratic Society

Dispute is a term often heard and often spoken in daily usage. It is to be seen in every society. It is the result of diversity. Diversity in human is expressed through disputes. Variety of individual aims needs and aspirations create conflicts. Diversity appears based on language, caste, religion and territories. Consequenlty, conflicts among individuals, individuals and states, states and states occur.

Disputes bring both destructive and constructive results. In the process of social development, conflict can be taken as a constructive and creative force. For example, an unresolved problem or series of problems is given expression in this manner.

Individual's mind which leads to conflict

A conflict originates due to dissent in the mind of an individual. As a result, the individual is inclined to uncommon behaviours like unrest, tension, sudden anger, intolerance, use of harsh language, unruly behaviour or assault. Unless such conflicting mental conditions are settled soon and continued it can end in mental illness.

Individuals who evince such behaviour can cause disputes within the family, between families, in the society and within institutions. As it is detrimental to the individual and society, a solution should be sought at the beginning. Since the conflict occurs as a result of the mindset of the individual, the elimination or the minimisation of a conflict can be affected by way of mental peace.

Basic reasons for conflicts

The triangular struggle conflicts model of Joban Galtun is useful to study about conflicts.

B   Context

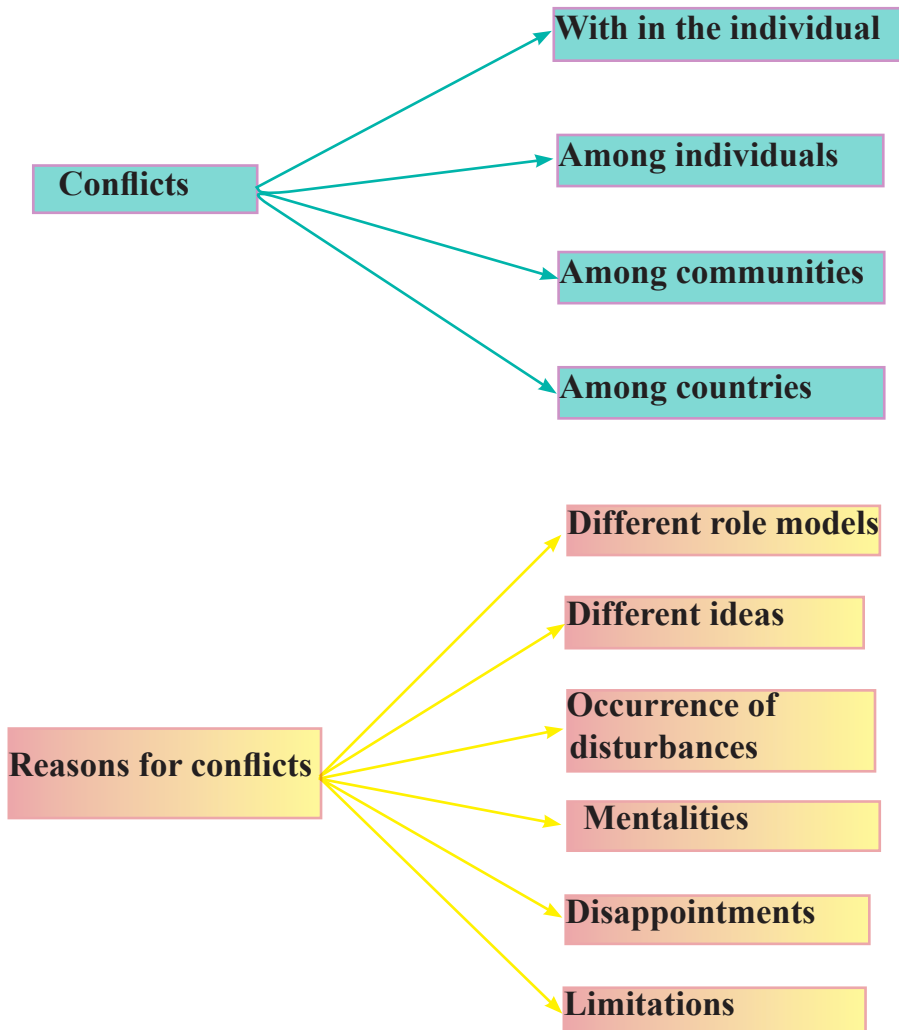Attitudes   C   A Behaviour
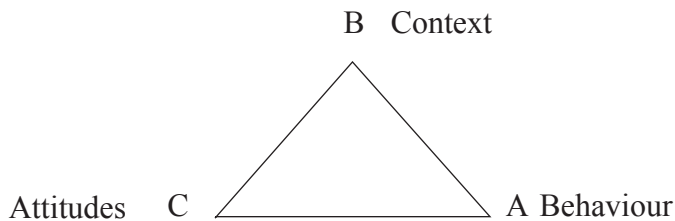
The context here is the background to the conflict. Conflicts occur on the connections based on the desires of the parties. Hence the context explains the social, economic and political environment responsible for the conflict.

Attitudes are the psychological factors on which conflict develop. It is due to the true or wrong beliefs of both the parties. Violent conflicts are caused by misconceptions among participants. Mental states such as fear, suspicion, disappointment and hatred do occur in minds. The final result is the conflict due to aggressive attitudes.

Behaviour related to conflicts is multifaced. It can be helpful or forceful. Forceful behaviour can be aggressive or destructive.

Parties that conflicts occur

Conflicts
- With in the individual
- Among individuals
- Among communities
- Among countries

Reasons for conflicts
- Different role models
- Different ideas
- Occurrence of disturbances
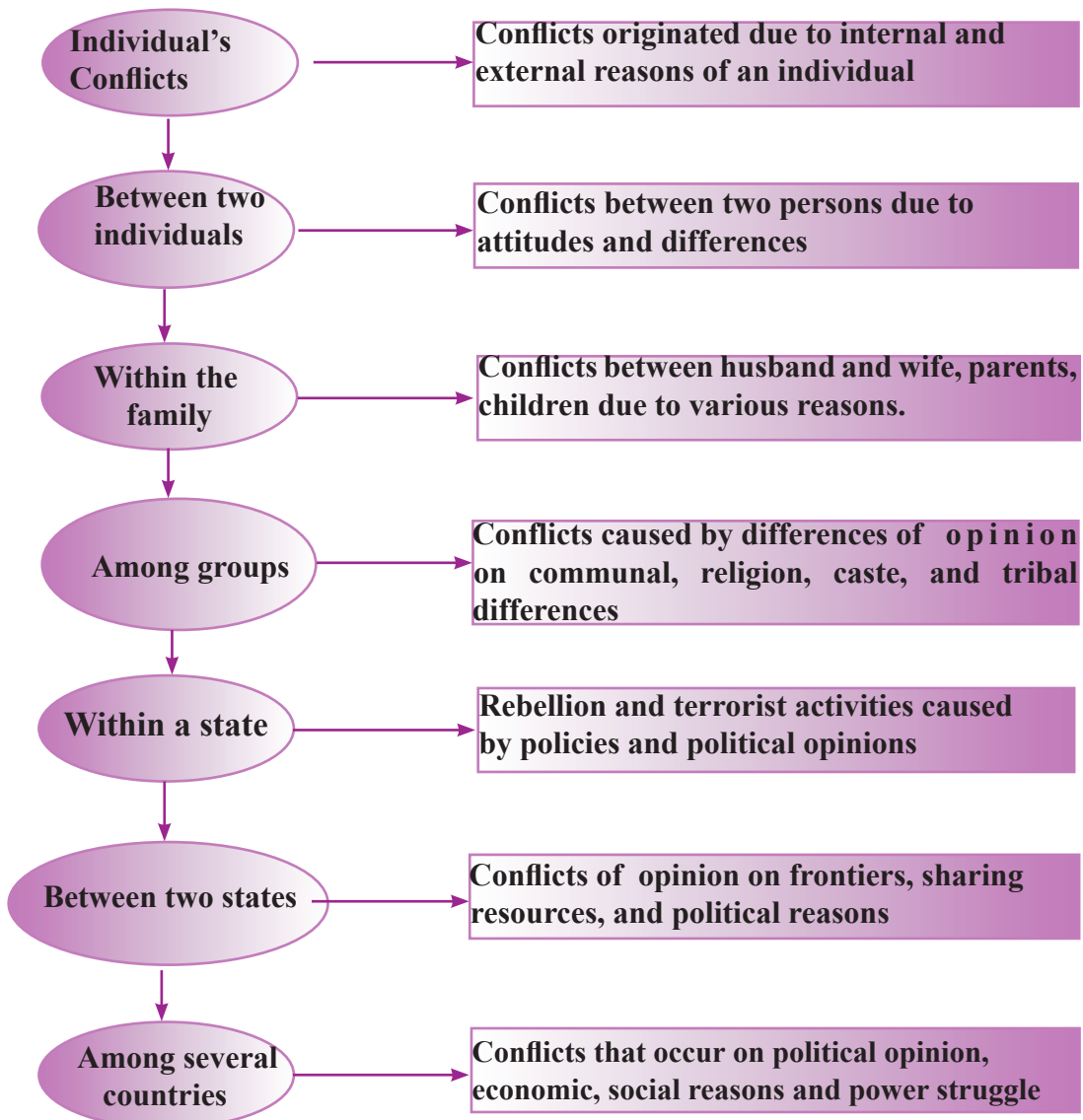- Mentalities
- Disappointments
- Limitations

Activity

- Remember a conflict situation faced by you
- What are its causes of that at conflict?
- What are the ill - effects you got out of that?
- Discuss the action you would have taken to avoid it.

Types of conflicts

Conflicts can be identified by their nature when studying about the types of conflicts.

According to the following diagram they can be studied broadly under two main areas, such as,

- Internal conflicts
- International conflicts

Individual's Conflicts	**Conflicts originated due to internal and external reasons of an individual**
Between two individuals	**Conflicts between two persons due to attitudes and differences**
Within the family	**Conflicts between husband and wife, parents, children due to various reasons.**
Among groups	**Conflicts caused by differences of opinion on communal, religion, caste, and tribal differences**
Within a state	**Rebellion and terrorist activities caused by policies and political opinions**
Between two states	**Conflicts of opinion on frontiers, sharing resources, and political reasons**
Among several countries	**Conflicts that occur on political opinion, economic, social reasons and power struggle**

Internal Conflicts

The personal and social conflicts among the people of a country can be categorised as internal conflicts. These can be categorised as universal and intricate conflict. For example, the conflicts which are of national level or wider level can be called universal conflicts. The conflicts among communities, religions, and national trade union can be cited as examples. Examples of intricate conflicts are the mental conflicts caused in an individual due to disappointment, family conflicts, economic problems, domestic violence and land disputes.

Not only individual level reason but national level reason also affect these conflicts. It is obvious that individual conflicts cannot be solved without solving national level conflicts and vice versa. In solving conflicts, individual and national level relations have to be taken into serious consideration.

International Conflicts

Conflicts between countries are called international conflicts. They are of two kinds.

- Conflicts of opinions
- Military conflicts.

Political, social and economic differences create differences of opinion and they are called conflicts of opinions. The conceptual conflict of capitalist and socialist camps, western and eastern cultures and Christian countries of the west and the middle eastern Islamic countries can be cited as examples.

Resources, economic benefits and expansion of powers are the reasons behind international conflicts.

The final outcome of an international conflict is war. This situation is to be seen at global and territorial level and between countries. The 1st and 2nd world wars were extremely gruesome. Millions of human lives were destroyed and the loss of property and environmental damage was terrible.

Fig 5.1 - First world war

Fig 5.2 - Second world war

Though there is no wars of global level, there are many wars between several countries. The wars between Israel and Palestine, Indo Pakistan, the war against Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, Turkey by America and the European community can be indicated as examples.

Fig 5.3 - A part of Gaza Strip

Fig 5.4 - An instance of Libyan war

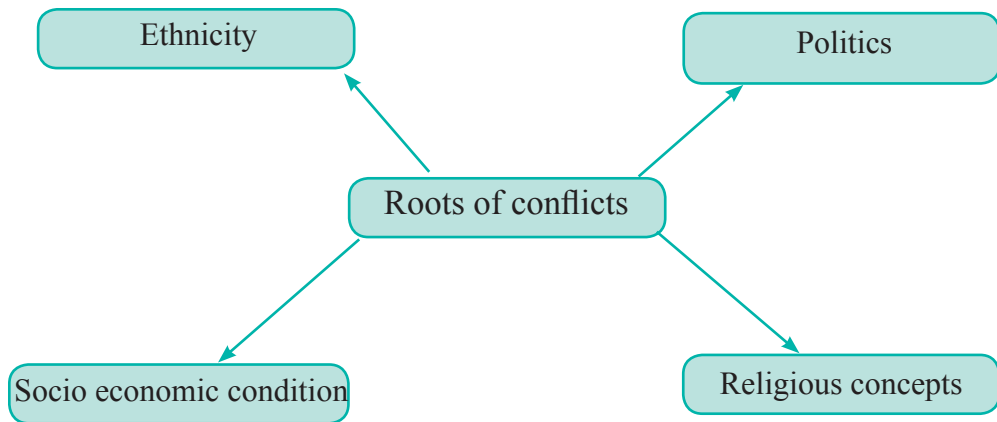**Fig 5.5 - Dangers of Syrian war**

Activity

Collect and present the following information on an ongoing war.

- Countries engaged in the war
- Reasons for the escalation of war
- Actions taken to make peace

Roots of Conflicts

Communal feeling, Political ideologies, religious ideologies, socio - economic problems can be sighted as main roots of conflicts. It is represented by the diagram below.

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                Ethnicity                                              Politics


                              Roots of conflicts


  Socio economic condition                                  Religious concepts
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Ethnicity   ⟶ Caste Eg. Tribal conflicts between Tutsis and Hutus of Rwanda.

⟶ Tribes

⟶ Opinion

⟶ Physical nature - Apartheid in South Africa

⟶ Social strata

Political   ⟶ Frontiers Eg (Israel - Palestine conflict)

⟶ Expansion of power (western capitalists' conflict with Russia)

Social economic status   ⟶ Poverty (conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia)

⟶ Market (Eg: imposition of economic embargo)

⟶ Resources (conflict in the Middle East)

Religious ideology   ⟶ Sectoral conflicts (Irish war)

⟶ Between religions (War of the cross)

Methods of conflict resolution

The resentment and contradictory ideas of individuals create disputes. Such situations can be settled at the outset, avoiding conflict. For this individuals and various parties can follow many methods.

Democratic action can be cited as the best method in conflict resolution. Taking decisions, listening to the voice of both parties is meant by this. This is important in the case of an individual, family, nation or international area as well.

Being insensitive to a conflict of opinion which exists in an individual or among a group of people can lead to a conflict can lead to a dispute. By ensuring a good communication with the relevant parties the eruption of violence can be prevented.

Conflict resolution is important because the results of conflicts can be unhealthy for the individual as well as society. Conflicts appear in different shapes and levels. Understanding the present situation of a conflict is of paramount importance in conflict situations. As such, various suitable methods need to be studied. The important methods which can be used are discussion, bargaining and conciliation, mediation, peaceful settlement, arbitration, inquiry and counselling.

Discussion

The basic methods of conflict resolution is discussion. The parties who were instrumental in the conflict find a resolution after coming to a table directly or by way of third party discussions. The parties succeed in coming to "win- win" situations.

Aspects of discussion

- Coming to a settlement by way of discussions
- Personal or confidential environment
- Instant solutions
- Minimum cost
- Informal structure
- "Win - win" for both parties

Opportunities where discussion can be utilised

- Personal disputes
- Family disputes
- Property disputes
- Institutional disputes
- Inter - institution disputes
- Disputes within and among countries

Activity

- Select an occasional disputable situation in your classroom / school and present how you would make use of the discussion method to solve it using a role play.

Bargaining and amicable settlement

This method is in use to solve democratically the problems that arise between employee and employer. The related parties come to a resolution on their demands. In this process the parties demonstrate their opposition whenever they disagree. Ultimately both the parties agree on certain decisions considering their demands and resolve the conflicts.

In industrial conflicts, estate labour conflicts, trade unions, discussion and bargaining methods are used.

Aspects of bargaining

- A team work
- Existence of the (employer - employee) both parties
- Discussion at the discussion table
- Mutual agreement
- Formal process
- Related to service conditions and wages
- Bargaining commences from demands
- Bargaining ends in an agreement

- Explain the special features of bargaining.
- Explain the advantages of settling disputes of employer - employee by way of bargaining.

Mediation

Mediation is used in helping two persons to communicate or two countries to settle a dispute when the discussion method has failed. This is a mediation sans war. Professional mediators, specialists in conflict resolution, the relevant parties of the conflict and external parties can be used as mediators.

Facts to be considered when selecting a mediator

- An unbiased individual accepted by both parties
- Who has a thorough knowledge of the conflict
- A person who does not force his own decisions and solutions on the parties
- Who does not influence either party
- Who directs parties towards a solution acceptable to both parties
- Meets both parties separately in an instances where they cannot be met directly and communicate between both parties
- Directs towards flexible solutions and arrives at win -win solutions

Qualities of a mediator

- A good listener
- Fidelity
- Dedication
- Honesty
- Unbiased nature
- Moderation
- Observation and Creativity

Opportunities to use mediation

- Family disputes (Eg. Domestic violence)
- Consumer and trade disputes (Eg. Regarding goods produced below the standard)
- Disputes between tenants and the house owners. (Eg. Regarding removal of tenents)
- Employers - employee disputes (Eg. Regarding wages and overtime payments)
- Adult boards (Eg. Regarding disputes between old parents and children)
- Conflicts between nations
- Conflicts between countries

Activity

- Mention the particular features of the mediation process.
- Explain the uses of mediation in resolving problems.
- Select a conflict situation in your classroom/ school and be a mediator for it. Explain what action you have taken.

Conciliation

Conciliation is the intervention or mediation in a conflict or disagreement. It is not the final settlement. Conciliator may be an individual or a group. It is meant to settle disputes by discussing with the opposite sides. Conciliation is useful when both parties are in neither win nor lose positions. The conciliator may take part to settle the dispute on a request by one of the parties or someone else.

Role of the conciliator

- Induce the opposite parties to a discussion
- Take the initiative to explain the underlying reasons for the conflict
- Raise a direct or indirect discussion regarding the reasons of the conflict
- Try to reduce the gap and the difference between the opposite parties
- Suggest a programme to enter into agreements

The Conciliatory Council has been established as a legal entity by the Ministry of Justice to conciliate. It directs settlement of conflicting situations, minor offences, family disputes before taking them to courts. Many such conciliatory councils have been established at regional level.

Opportunities for using conciliation

- Settlement of family disputes
- Settle labour disputes
- Settle disputes among groups of people
- Disputes concerning public property
- Settlement of minor offences (Insult, Warning and damage to property)

Activity

- Participate in a session of a conciliatory board in your area.
- Prepare a report after studying the process thoroughly.

Arbitration

Arbitration is the process which is useful in settling a dispute with the consent of the parties by a mediator. The person who is selected for the purpose is the arbitrator. The arbitrator listens to the problems and questions and finally the correct party is explained. Although both parties are supposed to find solutions, the outstanding feature is the win - lose situation.

Qualities of an arbitrator

- Gives good hearing
- Unbiased stand
- Balanced presence
- Takes correct decisions
- Creativity and observation
- Ability to explain clearly and meaningfully
- Equity

Chances of using arbitration

- Settling individual disputes
- Disputes of wages and rights
- Employer disputes
- Disciplinary inquiries
- Disputes over finance

Activity

- Act out a role play to portray the settlement of disputes by way of arbitration.
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of solving disputes through arbitration.

Inquiry

Inquiry is the traditional method of conflict resolution. A court of law or a parallel body advises the relevent parties to the conflict to come to a settlement at first and if it fails the dispute is settled by legal inquiry. The verdict of the judiciary is final and the loser can appeal to a higher court of law.

Aspects of Inquiry

- Both parties cannot refrain from coming to the discussion
- The defendant should appear in court
- Giving evidence, legal inquiry is formal
- Both parties have freedom to give evidence, argue and cross examine
- Verdict is given according to the law
- The court decision is final and both parties are bound by it
- Ability to appeal
- The loser should pay the costs of litigation

Fig 5.6 - Aluthkade Courts Complox

Building a compromise

Both parties of the conflict are brought to a compromise by a third party in this process. Both parties sign an agreement to certify the settlement of the dispute. The particular feature is the contribution of a third party to observe the implementation of the agreement.

Chances of settling disputes by compromise

- Family disputes
- Employer - Employee disputes
- Disputes with neighbours
- Disputes between institutions
- Disputes among peers

Counselling

Counselling is the facilitation and direction given by a third party to settle the conflicts between two parties or among individuals. Here, directing the parties for alternative settlements, making them aware of the consequences and directing them to mitigate the conflicts are done.

Qualities a citizen should possess in settling disputes

There are a lot of qualities to be developed personally and socially to overcome the challenges aimed at a person, facing disputes is one such challenge. The following qualities should be developed.

Personal traits

- Self awareness
- Patience
- Kindness and Clemency
- Creative thinking
- Effective decision taking
- Happiness
- Endurance
- Effective communication
- Sensitivity
- Innocence

Social traits a person should have

- Respect other's opinion
- Fulfilment of duties
- Justice
- Empathy
- Tolerate victory and loss
- Listening
- Inter - personal relations
- Generosity
- Respect others
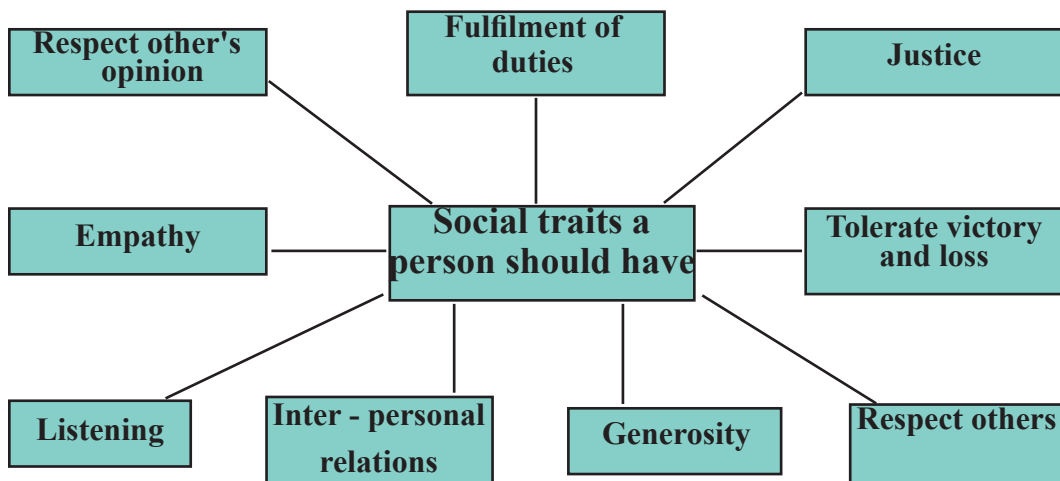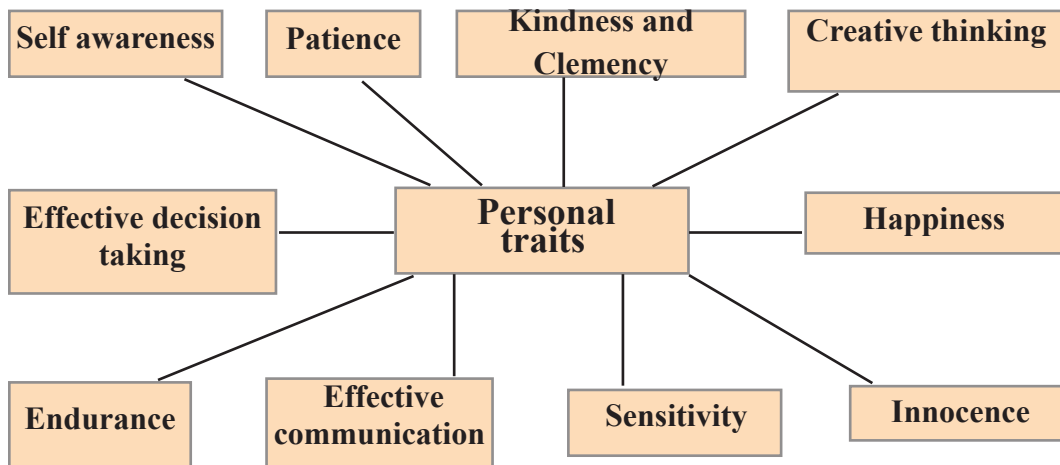
Activity

- Breath well with your eyes closed for a moment
- Recollect the best qualities within you
- Be happy about them
- Draw a creative picture about the qualities within you and exhibit it

- Advantages of peaceful resolution of conflicts

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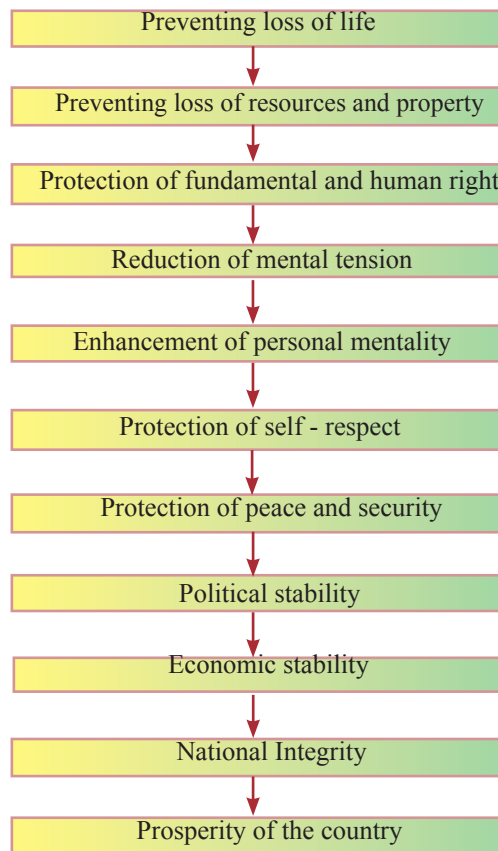
According to the above chart, conflict brings personal and social deterioration as such avoidance of conflicts is vital for the development of people and the country, Accordingly, individual peace brings peace to the family and peace in the family brings peace to the country. Which ultimately tely bring about world peace.

Activity

- Propose your own list of suggestions to control the provocative situations within you.
- Suggest things one could do to prevent disturbance to the others in the family, school, and society.