

## UNIVERSAL PROCESS FOR THE EVALUATION OF BELIEFS & ASSUMPTIONS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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### ABSTRACT

As conflict prevails at each and every level of human living from individual, family, society to nature/existence. Conflict is always expressed in the form of behavior and work. The behavior and work of human being is governed by what we believe and assume. So this paper focuses on beliefs and assumptions in an individual. Unverified beliefs & assumptions are main cause of conflict in the behavior and work of an individual. Beliefs & assumptions have great impact on the behavior and work of an individual. If beliefs & assumptions go wrong, the same will be reflected in the behavior of an individual in the form of conflict with other human beings. In this paper different sources for the formation of beliefs & assumptions in an individual have been discussed. This paper also describes the impact of beliefs & assumptions on behavior and work of an individual, if these originate from preconditioning or sensations. The universal process for the evaluation of beliefs & assumptions, which is helpful to resolve the conflict in the behavior and work of an individual, has been described in this paper.

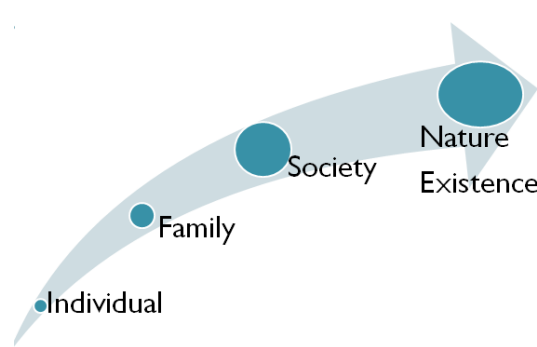
**KEYWORDS:** Conflict, Individual, Beliefs, Assumptions, Preconditioning, Natural acceptance

### INTRODUCTION

In last three decades there have been tremendous advancements and developments in the field of education and means of communication i.e. science and technology, despite of so much materialistic and technological innovations we can see the conflicts at international level, national level, and at local level between states, districts and in organizations. Bawa and Singh (2016) These conflicts are prevalent at every level of human living which opens-up new issues of concern among the nations, states and societies. B L Bajpai (2004) At International level, nations-states is in conflict for political, economic, military or other reasons. We witness number of inter and intra-regional conflicts within nation. For sake of giving conflict resolution theories or resolving conflicts at different levels we have only taken diplomatic solutions. Till now we have only worked on the symptoms of conflicts for its resolution. We have been failed to find out the root cause of conflicts. There is a need to see the cause of conflicts from a different perspective and that perspective is individual's perspective. An individual always lives at four levels: self, family, society and nature/existence, moreover each individual lives at all the four level at the same time. Individual is an actor for all the activities. Bawa and Singh (2016) "Review of the Conflict Theories. An Analysis of Causes, Effect and Way ahead", G200 Youth Summit Conference Proceeding, Germany (2016). An individual didn't recognize these levels of human living; this is one of the reasons for conflict. The current state of 'being' suggests that individuals are in conflicts at all the levels of living. At the level of

individual he or she has issues regarding lack of clarity for goals of life, contradictions, stress / depression, disregard for others, inactive lifestyles, overweight and other health problems, substance abuse and risk taking, suicide, insecurity, loneliness and psychological disorders. Anand Gandhi (2003) At the level of family - We can see problems related to mutual understanding, increasing events of mistrust, insecurity and generation gap. The all-consuming pursuit of many by any means, peer pressure, competition, shrinking circle of families; to be cared for-while exploiting every other, lack of communication with siblings, breaking of families, insecurity in relationships, divorce, family feuds, incest, legal suits. At the level of society - We can see easily increase of communal conflicts, exploitation of people and strife, terrorism effecting nations and violence in various forms. Al Gore (2006) At the level of nature - Inevitable destruction of nature, non-evolvement with nature, cruelty to animals, climate change, water scarcity and pollution of air/soil, noise pollution, resource depletion of minerals and mineral oils, sizeable deforestation and loss of fertility of soil.

The conflict in an individual which transforms the conflict to family, from family conflict goes to society and from society it escalates to nature/existence which is shown in following Conflict escalation model Figure1.



**Figure 1: Conflict Escalation Model**

Now days, we are studying all the external factors but not the individual who is initiating all the conflicts and the one who is working for the resolution of all the conflicts. The main cause of conflict in an individual is such beliefs and assumptions, which are unverified and ultimately they leads to contradictions in an individual.

An individual always expresses themselves through their behavior and work. If there is contradiction in the thoughts of an individual, the same gets expressed outside in the form of behavior with other human beings and in the form of work with rest of nature. Rest of nature includes everything that exists all around us like air, soil, water, plants, and animals. So finally this contradiction of an individual turns out as the contradictions at all the levels of human living. As said earlier the root cause of conflict is an individual is unverified assumptions. Right evaluation of these beliefs and assumptions turns them into universal values. This transformation resolves the contradictions, which leads to harmony in an individual. An individual who is in harmony with himself, when behaves with other human beings leads to mutual happiness and work of such human being with rest of nature will lead to mutual fulfillment. Thus right evaluation of beliefs and assumptions in an individual can eliminate all the contradictions and can resolve the conflicts among human beings.

Now the challenge is to define a process for the evaluation of beliefs and assumptions and this process should be universal. But before defining this universal process, it is must to find out the different sources of beliefs and assumptions and to trace out the impact of beliefs and assumptions on behavior with other human beings and work with rest of nature.

Our beliefs and assumptions play a very important part in the way we behave with other human beings and we work with rest of nature. There is direct relationship between what we believe & assume with our behavior and work. The reason for the above said can be found in a phrase that has become almost mantra for systemic thinkers. The phrase, 'We don't believe the world we see, we see the world we believe' can shed light on the relationship between our beliefs & assumptions with our behavior and work.

The beliefs & assumptions in an individual determine the content of desire and thoughts in an individual. Our behavior and work are the direct outcome of our desires and thoughts. It implies that our behavior with other human beings and work with rest of nature is directly proportional to the content of our desires and thoughts.

Human beings behavior/work  $\propto$  Contents of desire & thought in an individual

bw  $\propto$  dt

Where b = behavior, w = work, d = desire, t = thought and e = expectation

## **BELIEF AND ASSUMPTION**

Our beliefs and assumptions play a huge part in the way we make decisions. Bawa and Singh (2016) Belief & assumption can be defined as desire, thought or information that is accepted or assumed to be true or right. It is acceptance or agreement with external input (preconditioning) to our self. Belief & assumption don't have any supporting evidence or logic for its rightness. It is possible for our beliefs and values to differ over time as we encounter evidence or have experiences that challenge older held beliefs & assumptions. If a belief & assumption is evaluated on the basis of any supportive evidence or logic, it gets converted into universal value. Value is always true. We as human beings have will to know, we have will to learn and the early years of our life are clear demonstrations of it. We learn to talk and walk by just our observations outside. No one teaches us how to do these things. No one stands in front of flipchart and makes diagram of vocal chords and airflow nor do they make little stick figures that explains the relationship between balance and muscle adjustments that make walking possible. So will to know and learn seems to be part of our very being.

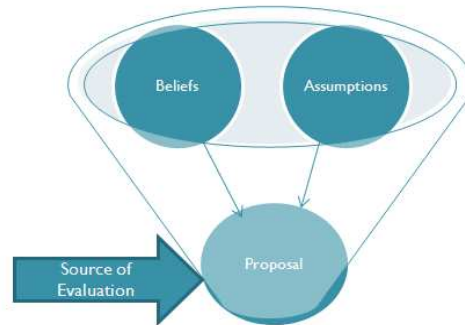
Rieley (2012) The Impact of beliefs and Assumptions on Decision Making. Systems Thinking World Journal: Reflection in Action.

An individual gets a lot of information from outside i.e. from parents, teachers, friends, society, media & advertisements etc., which forms beliefs & assumptions in individual and without even investigating into it most of the times he assumes these things to be true.

Let's take an example of formation of beliefs & assumptions in an individual. We see that the media plays a very strong input to our ideas of what is 'right' or 'wrong', what is socially acceptable or not and media does so through promotions, advertisements, seductions and celebrities. As we are individuals, we consume different kind of facilities and become more fragmented in our opinion and become consumers of the media and the products which it offers. The media thus begins to form beliefs & assumptions in us.

As we get older, we start living with these beliefs & assumptions by expressing these beliefs and assumptions through our behavior and work. We found sometimes these beliefs & assumptions are true and sometimes false. Because these beliefs & assumptions are not evaluated that's why it creates confusion at the level of individual. So this is the need

of hour to evaluate the beliefs & assumptions in order to abolish the contradictions at the level of individual.



**Figure 2: Need of Evaluation of Beliefs & Assumptions**

The behavior and work of human being is called human conduct. The bases for human conduct are desires & thoughts in the individual and the basis for the desires & thoughts are the beliefs and assumptions in an individual. The unevaluated beliefs & assumptions leads to inner contradictions, confusions and dilemma in desires & thoughts, which we find difficult to resolve. At times we feel lack of confidence about our decisions and actions which leads to conflict. If an individual is living in contradiction or in conflict, then it means individual is not self-organized. Hence individual is living with unevaluated beliefs & assumptions, wherein he has believed or assumed certain things, have accumulated desires without having priory evaluated them, then it means he is living in *partantra* (enslaved). Gaur *et al.* (2010) You can ask yourself whether we are *swatantra* or *partantra*. Till there is a difference between what we are and what we really want to be, we are not *swatantra*, because we will always be in contradictions or conflicts.

*partantra*: Living according to preconditioning or sensations is called *partantra*.

*swatantra*: Living according to the natural acceptance is called *swatantra*.

Hence, since an individual is not in self-organization, it gets expressed in his living: be it in behavior with other humans or in his interaction in the form of work - the outcome is going to be conflict.

## SOURCES OF BELIEFS & ASSUMPTIONS

Our beliefs & assumptions grow from what we see, hear, read, think, observe and experience. As a result we develop a belief or assumption that we hold to be true and not changing at that time.

The beliefs & assumptions are our very long learnt opinions. We remain unaware of very nature of our own beliefs & assumptions which remains expressed through our behavior and whatever we do.

Basic beliefs & assumptions are normally rooted in our childhood, early family life, culture and society. From the childhood we take a lot of input from outside i.e. parents, teachers, society, friends, media, advertisement etc. which are the sources of beliefs & assumptions. The sources of beliefs & assumptions can be divided into following categories:

- Preconditioning
- Sensations
- Natural acceptance

### **Preconditioning**

Pre-conditioning means, we have assumed something on the basis of prevailing notions from. When you see an advertisement for a big car, what happens? You pay attention to the advertisement, and then you think about it. As you think, you start building up the idea, it plays on you, and slowly you decide that you 'want' this car because when you have this car everybody will respect you. Thus, you have associated the car with some notion of greatness, specialty of your being, i.e. it has become your desire or belief. This is the meaning of a belief or desire on the basis of preconditioning. Pre-conditioning means, we have assumed something about it on the basis of prevailing notions about it. We have not evaluated the belief or desire in our own right. As a result, we are not clear about what we will get out of fulfillment of that desire. Unless we verify our beliefs or desires, we may not even know whether they are ours! We may go on spending whole of our lifetime accumulating beliefs/assumptions or desires that are not ours, and in making efforts to fulfill them, which means, our entire lifetime's beliefs/assumptions and behavior/work may be 'borrowed' as a result that we would never know whether we did the right thing?

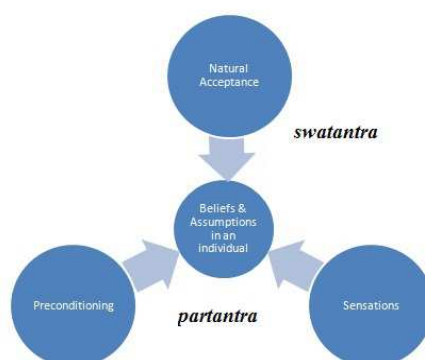
### **Sensation**

Sensation received from body can be the source of belief & assumption. Let us take an example to clarify this point. Your friend takes you to a restaurant. You eat some food there. You liked it so much. You start assuming that this restaurant is very fine. You start coming to that restaurant very frequently and now you need that food everyday, which can make you unhealthy. Eating the food, by itself is not so much the issue; the issue is that we have become so much dependent on sensations, that instead of giving us some sensory pleasure, it becomes the source for unhappiness. This is the sensation from the body and we have ended up being conditioned by it. The role that sensation plays is that it tells whether the object in the outside world is suitable for the body or not. The sensation of smell gives us the information of something has rotten and it is not suitable to eat.

### **Natural Acceptance**

Natural acceptance is there in each one of us, and it is invariant and unchanging. Natural acceptance is a faculty that is present in all of us. We only have to start paying attention to it, to start "seeing" it. It is the basis for us to verify what we really want to be. As we start verifying our beliefs & assumptions, if we find that they come from preconditioning or from sensation and they are something we don't really want, they get dropped by themselves. On the other hand, if we find them naturally acceptable, then we know they are right for us. Let us take an example, ask yourself this question: 'Is trust naturally acceptable to you in relationship, or is mistrust naturally acceptable?' What is the answer? Always trust is naturally acceptable to you in relationship. Similarly, ask one more question: "Do I want to live in relationship with others or do I want to live in opposition with others?" Always it turns out to be - live in relationship with others. We can get the answers from within ourselves and it is spontaneous. The answers are there in all of us, naturally. We only need to start paying attention towards natural acceptance. Let's ask ourselves another very basic question: Do I want to be happy? The answer is yes! How did you get this answer? Very obviously, through your natural acceptance. This seems very simple to begin with, but we shall see that this becomes a very powerful method for us to evaluate the beliefs and assumptions.

When you start evaluating these questions on the basis of your natural acceptance, you will be able to start accessing these answers yourself. This natural acceptance is there in all of us, it is what we most spontaneously, most naturally desire. There is no need to import this natural acceptance from outside; we don't have to learn it from somewhere! For example, when you asked the question "whether trust is most acceptable to me in relationship", did you go outside for the answer? Did you read or learn the answer from somewhere? Did you have to refer to some book? The answer is NO. This answer came from your natural acceptance. Similarly, about the answer to- "Is living in relationship with others is naturally acceptable to me". Did you need to learn this from others? Again NO! Thus natural acceptance is the way to evaluate the beliefs & assumptions in an individual.



**Figure 3: Sources of Beliefs & Assumptions**

We have beliefs & assumptions largely set by pre-conditionings or sensations. Beliefs & assumptions are basically our desires, thoughts and expectations. So our desires, thoughts and expectations are originated from pre-conditioning or sensations. Think of your state of mind when you are attending a lecture. You have to study, but you feel lethargic about it. You would rather think about movie you have seen yesterday. Even as you sit down and try to work, you start thinking about the movie and keep getting disturbed. On the contrary, had you gone to the movie, you would have been thinking about your studies all the time, and hence felt guilty. What is happening? We are undecided, unsure – we call this 'conflict', or having 'conflicting tendencies' within. This happens to us most of the time. Each one of us is facing these kinds of conflicts; and we face them through out the day: such conflicts lead to stress and unhappiness in us.

### **PROPERTIES OF NATURAL ACCEPTANCE**

Gaur *et al.* (2010) To understand natural acceptance<sup>5</sup> in more detail, let's have a look at the properties of natural acceptance. Natural acceptance does not change with time. Our natural acceptance for respect or trust does not change with time. I want to live in relationship with my parents, this is naturally accepted to all of us, it does not change with time. Natural acceptance is universal, whether we are in India, USA or China. Natural acceptance doesn't depend upon our beliefs or pre conditioning. We are advised frequently of not to trust people of other religions, cast, creed or state, we can ask ourselves either it is naturally acceptable to us or not. It doesn't matter how deep our beliefs and pre conditioning is. As long as we refer to our deep down natural acceptance this question sincerely, the answer will always be the same. Natural acceptance is constantly there, something we can refer to always. Ask this yourself: think of cheating or exploiting someone. The moment you think of it, you feel a contradiction within and feel unhappy that very moment. It does happen, either we are aware of it or not. Same way the moment we think of disrespecting someone, we become unhappy. Only a

thought is enough to cause conflict within us. Thus this natural acceptance is always there, and if we start paying attention towards it, if ask ourselves every time, for every belief/assumption or thought we have, "Is this naturally acceptable to me?", we will get an answer. Whatever we do, this natural acceptance remains within us, it tells what is right. Every time we do something not acceptable to us, there is contradiction or conflict in us, because that conflicts with our own natural acceptance. It will become clear to us that while we want something other than our natural acceptance, we think or do something else on the basis of our beliefs and pre conditioning. It creates conflict in us. Natural acceptance is same for all of us. We can easily find that no one accepts disrespect in relationship. It doesn't matter who the person, however bad or good, one always expects respect in relationship. Let us take an example say Ram disrespects Sham. Now Sham wants to take revenge against Ram and thinking of teaching him a lesson. This is because disrespect is not naturally acceptable to Sham. This may actually end up leading to a large scale conflict. Anyone can start checking and evaluating this for themselves. Each one of us have acceptance which are same. Our beliefs, assumptions, choices, likes or dislikes may be different. But at the very basic levels and common issues like need for conflict resolution, happiness, trust, respect, we all are same. We have the same basic acceptance.

Gaur *et al.* (2010) Human Values and Professional Ethics, New Delhi. Do we ever refer to our natural acceptance to find out what is right for us? Rarely do we do this today. We hardly ask ourselves, what do I really want to do? Since this question is never asked, since we hardly explored into it, we keep on desiring, thinking and selecting, but with conflicts and contradictions. This becomes clear that since our beliefs/assumptions, desires, thoughts and expectations are based on pre-conditionings or sensations and not on our natural acceptance, they leads to conflict in an individual.

## **IMPACT OF BELIEFS & ASSUMPTIONS ON AN INDIVIDUAL**

It is discussed earlier that beliefs and assumptions directly affects the behavior and work of an individual. If beliefs and assumptions are governed by preconditioning and sensations then it leads to confusion in an individual. Individual remains in stress, which leads to unhappiness. Beliefs and assumptions keep on changing as new inputs keep coming form outside. There is lack of clarity about the self, relationship, society, nature and existence (four levels of human living). There is a feeling of unfulfilled and unsettled which leads to lack of self confidence and self discipline.

### **Universal Process for Evaluation of Beliefs & Assumptions**

Input we take from preconditions or sensations; take it in the form of a proposal. Don't assume it to be true or false, take it as a proposal. Don't accept it as it is, or assume it to be true. We seem to have assumed many things to be true or false till now. If we accept what we are saying here to be true as well, it would only add to our set of assumptions and beliefs and instead of being an aid for us or helping us, it will end up to creating contradictions in us.

Verify the proposals on your own right. You need to continuously verify all the proposals being made to you in your own right. Nobody can do this for you; you have to do it at your own. It has to be self-evaluated by you as shown in [Figure 4](#).

Don't just accept or reject the proposals on the basis of scriptures, instruments or others. We are not trying to under evaluating the importance of scriptures, instruments or the guidance obtainable from wise persons. We are only suggesting that proposals should be seriously evaluated on the basis of your own right.

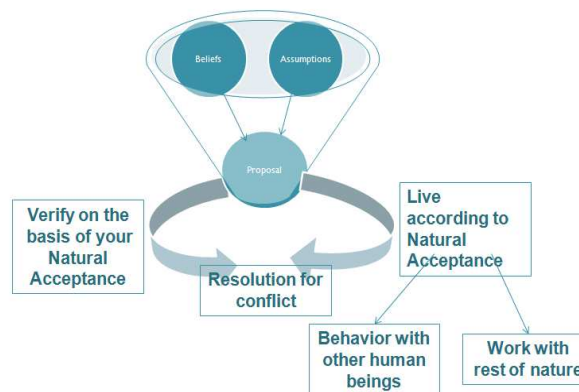
Verify the proposal on the basis of your natural acceptance. As discussed earlier, Natural acceptance is a faculty

that is present in all of us. It is intact and invariant. You only have to start paying attention to it. For every proposal being made to you, you shall evaluate it with your own natural acceptance.

Gaur *et al.* (2010) *Human Values and Professional Ethics*, New Delhi. If it matches with your own natural acceptance, i.e. if it is naturally acceptable to you, it is true for you. If it does not, then it is not true for you and you can discard the proposal. Let's not assume what is being stated to be true! You need to ensure that you match every proposal with your own natural acceptance! This is the process of self-evaluation; every proposal being made to you should be matched with your natural acceptance.

In last, start living according to proposal to validate it experientially by living with other human beings or with rest of nature. The expression of living with other human being is behavior and expression of living with rest of nature is work. To verify the proposals, I need to live accordingly to my interactions with the outside world.

If the proposal is true, there will be mutual happiness among human beings and mutual prosperity among human beings and rest of nature.



**Figure 4: Process for the Evaluation of Beliefs & Assumptions**

Everybody desires mutual happiness, fulfillment in their relations with other human beings and mutual prosperity with the rest of nature. This way we can evaluate the beliefs & assumptions by transferring these beliefs & assumptions into universal values.

## CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE SCOPE

Conflict gets expressed in the behavior and work of human being, is the result of conflict and in light of natural acceptance for us, we have to verify and understand it.

Basically conflict at all the levels of human living from individual, family, society and nature/existence originates from contradictions and conflicts in desires, thoughts and expectations. Desires, thoughts, expectations in an individual originate through beliefs and assumptions. If beliefs and assumptions go wrong then desires, thoughts and expectations will be in contradictions, which gets reflected in the behavior and work of human being. It originates conflict. For conflict resolution it is mandatory to understand human being which is the coexistence of self and body. So our future work will be to explore the self of human being where these beliefs, assumptions, desires, thoughts, expectations originate.

Contradictions of beliefs and assumptions in an individual. The present study discussed that the behavior and



work of human being is directly related to the beliefs & assumptions in an individual. If there is a conflict in the behavior and work of human being, it shows that there is a contradiction in the beliefs & assumptions. Because human being has not evaluated the beliefs & assumptions, so we are not sure whatever we believe and assume is right or wrong. In this study we have discussed sources of beliefs & assumptions. If beliefs and assumptions originate from preconditioning and sensations, then beliefs and assumptions keep on changing from time to time as preconditioning keep on changing. Only those beliefs and assumptions remain invariant with respect to time which originates from natural acceptance. Then we have proposed a universal model for the evaluation of beliefs & assumptions. We have to start verifying our assumptions, beliefs on the basis of our natural acceptance and experiential validation. Living on the basis of natural acceptance makes us more authentic and leads to mutual happiness. As long as we are living on the basis of unverified assumptions, there is no authenticity in what we believe and assume. It gets reflected in our behavior and work in the form of conflict. Since we have not verified for ourselves, in our own right, we don't have the confidence about things. Ultimately, we are the judge of what is right

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